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Vol. I.

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SHORTY IN LUCK. BY PETER PAD.



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SHORTY IN LUCK.

A Sequel to "Shorty; or, Kicked Into Good Luck."

By PETER PAD,

Author of "Shorty; or, Kicked Into Good Luck," "Tommy Bounce, the Family Mischief," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE readers of No. 4 of THE FIVE CENT COMIC LIBRARY, entitled "Shorty; or, Kicked into Good Luck," will remember that we left our mischievous and prank-playing little friend, Shorty, taking the train for New York on his return from his racket in the country as a monkey, to find that the minstrel troupe in which he had so long shone as the boss star had departed from Buffalo without him.

"Dat's one keno for dem hamfatters; but dey won't get 'nother racket on dis coon in a hurry. I don't want ter travel wid any sich snide gang," muttered Shorty, as he dumped himself into a seat in the corner of the car, and looked thoughtfully out of the window.

But his fun-loving propensities would not let him remain quiet long, and before the cars were out of sight of the city, he was squinting around to see if there was any chance for some sport.

The seat directly in front of him was occupied by a foppish swell, in a shiny plug hat, kid gloves and an ulster overcoat, who divided his time between stroking his mustache and ogling everybody through an eye-glass, which kept constantly falling from his eye into his lap.

"Shoot me, if 'ere ain't a regular snob!" soliloquized Shorty, and a comical grin spread over his phiz as his eyes rested on this dandified passenger.

Diving down into one of his pockets he fished out a piece of fine brown twine, and managed, without being noticed, to fasten one end of it to the sleeve of the dandy's overcoat, and the other end to the bell-rope that ran through the cars in such a manner that, any movement of the latter's arm, would instantly ring the bell signaling the train to stop. Then, quietly sliding from his seat to one on the opposite side, Shorty cunningly awaited the result.

"Tickets, gentlemen!" shouted the conductor, coming in a few minutes later and slamming the door.

The dandy started, dropped his eye-glass, and, in stooping to pick it up, the string attached to his arm tightened, giving the bell-rope a tug; the whistle instantly screamed; the brakemen flew to the brakes, and the train came to a full stop.

"What's the trouble ahead there?" called out the conductor, bouncing out on the platform.

"What's the trouble behind, you mean?" shouted back the engineer, sticking his head out of the cab window.

"What in thunder and lightning did you whistle down brakes for?" screamed the conductor, jumping off the train into a snow-bank up to his knees, and waving his arms around excitedly.

"Give us a rest, will you? What d'you ring the bell for, if you don't want me to stop?"

"Ring fiddlesticks! I never touched your darn-bell!"

"That's too thin! I ain't feeding on cobweb and bet you'd go sling mud at yourself!" exclaimed Shorty, angrily.

"You got the jim-jam, you say?"

"Fust thing you know I'll engineer you over the ear, if you don't stop your fooling. D'you hear my gentle voice?" retorted the engineer, starting the train with a jerk that nearly dislocated the passengers' spines, and dumped an old farmer, who had got up to get a drink of water, head first into the dandy's lap.

Shorty, who had been shaking himself with laughter over the success of his racket, had taken advantage of the passengers having their heads out of the windows, to slip over, cut the string and resume his seat before the wrathful conductor put his face in the door.

"I bet dat conductor of ours would make a tip-top cork for a cologne bottle," remarked Shorty, as the conductor came along, punching the tickets and stamping the snow off his feet.

"What's the reason I would?" he demanded, gruffly.

"'Cause yer sich a bully good stopper."

"I don't want any of your sass, for I ain't in the humor to stand it," growled the conductor, as the people in the car commenced laughing.

"Oh, yer don't; well, I hear we run over something, anyhow."

"Then you heard just wrong, for we didn't."

"Why, a feller skinned thro' here a minute ago, and said we'd run over six miles since we'd left the depot," said Shorty, innocently.

"Well, that fellow and you must have been dining off razor straps, for you're both too smart to live long."

"Does der smart blokes allus croak young?"

"Yes."

"Den I guess you're safe ter live till der nex' Centenzul show," said Shorty, comically.

"And I guess I've had enough of your chin-music," growled the conductor, moving away.

"Ta-ta! drop me a postal card when yer want ter see me," said Shorty, and the passengers smiled aloud again.

"I'll make some of you gigglers grin the other side of your mouths first thing you know," snarled the conductor, turning back and threatening a tall, good-looking, handsomely-dressed young fellow in the seat behind Shorty, who had been laughing merrily at the latter's jokes.

"I s'pose you wouldn't punch anything bigger and stronger than a car ticket, would you?" asked the young man.

"Wouldn't I? I guess you don't know who you're talking to," said the other, savagely.

"Shah of Persia, mebbe," replied the young man.

"Grand Duke, de ticket puncher," chimed in Shorty.

"Red Cloud on the warpath," suggested the young man.

"Moses, der bull rusher, fightin' flies," chirped Shorty.

"Conductor of the train, and I'm going to make

"Guess you're only coddin', ole pie crust," exclaimed Shorty.

"I'll slam bang you!" yelled the conductor, grabbing at the young man, and trying to pull him out of his seat.

"Here's something you forgot behind you!" shouted Shorty, as he unfastened a large shawl-pin from his coat, leaned over and jabbed it several times under the conductor's coat-tails.

"Ouch! ow-ow-ow! Lordy! fire and brimstone! I'm stabbed! I'm stabbed!" yelled the conductor, letting go of his victim and dancing around the car with his hands on the wounded spot.

"Get off my foot, you dawning wretch!" screamed the dandy, pushing the conductor away from him.

"Who's a wretch, you monkey, you?"

"You aw bwute,"

"I'm a brute, am I?" shrieked the now thoroughly infuriated conductor, smashing the dandy's plug hat over his eyes, and striking out right and left.

The brakemen hurried in, and managed after awhile to quiet him down and lead him off into the baggage car to cool off, and put some sticking plaster on his bruises.

"He's waltzing away as mad as if he had a whole hive of bumblebees in his pants' pocket," said the young man, laughing, to Shorty.

"You bet, he's mad enough to light firecrackers by."

"By Jingo! Little one, you've done me a good, square turn, an' one I won't forget in a hurry, when you spurred him up behind, for the old tub was crowdin' me kinder close."

"Dat's all right, sport. I guess der old bloat's got 'nuff of us dis time," said Shorty.

"You did it like a trump. Seems to me if I'd seen you somewhere's before," remarked the young man, exchanging his seat for one alongside of Shorty.

"Fore the footlights, mebbe."

"Shouldn't wonder. What's your name, if it's a fair question?"

"Shorty—for short."

"Put it there, old boy," exclaimed the young man, putting out his hand and shaking Shorty's warmly. "And are you the famous Shorty that gave the minstrel troupe such a racket by porous plasters on their chairs?"

"Der same," said Shorty, laughing at the collection of the scene.

"And sent old Beaty, the cop, up to the house with a box of stones?"

"I'm der coon."

"Which way are you drifting now? I hear San Franciscos had gone the other way."

"Well, you see, I've shook dat gang, dey couldn't stan' a racket, so I've pulled 'em," replied Shorty.

"Why don't you pitch in, little one, and rip stavin' opposition troupe?"

"Wouldn't it pay?"

"You bet, it'd pay big, but I don't spond' to it."

"Oh, dat's the sticker, is it? Well, what do you say, Shorty, old fellow, to tacklin' a first-class troupe as manager and best card on the bills, an' starrin' it all over. I feel just like slam-bangin' it around this country and Europe on a bully old hurra of a tour with you. I've seen you on the boards an' know you're a hull team, an' a cross-eyed, spotted dorg under the wagon at the biz. So all you've got to do is to say the word. I'll stick up all the sugar you want, to rig you out in hummin' style, an' we'll just have one of the hunkiest old cruises together ever hatched, or my name's not Ned Shanks," proposed his new-found friend.

"Let's understand dis thing," said Shorty. "I'm ter boss der gang?"

"Korrek."

"Yer ter let me pick out my own crowd?"

"Korrek again."

"An' you'll rig 'em out fuss-class?"

"Still korrek."

"Star it here, there an' everywhere, hey?"

"Once more korrek."

"Both in this country and Europe?"

"Eggs-zactly."

"How're yer fix'd for der stamps?"

"You just bet I've got stacks of them," said Ned Shanks.

"An' yer willing ter flop 'em out ter make dis show get up an' bile?"

"You're shoutin' wisdom dis time."

"Dis huckleberry's ter show hisself in somfin' every night, I suppose?"

"That's what's the matter."

"An' you'll come along for a racket?"

"Yee up."

"Den I'm wid yer, pard, an' we'll jest scare up der red hottest ole gang of burnt corksers dat ever cracked der bones or slammed der sheepskin. You bet we'll make dat oder crowd of hamfatters look sick afore we're thro' wid 'em," said Shorty, and they shook hands heartily on their partnership.

"Where d'you propose scoopin' in your company, Shorty?" asked Shanks, after a moment's pause.

"I'll rake dem up 'f I have to go to 'Frisco," said Shorty in a confident manner.

"Goin' to have any of the old gang in this new crowd?"

"Nary a bloke."

"I s'pose New York's our best lay-out?" said Shanks.

"You bet; we'll hang up at some stunnin' hash-house, an' den advertise in der papers," explained Shorty.

"Fire away, that's the racket for me," replied his friend, and the matter was looked upon as settled.

The rest of their journey to the metropolis proved uneventful; Shorty and Ned Shanks chatted over their future arrangements and mapped out a good old time till the train rolled into the depot at New York.

Leaving the cars they were immediately besieged by a drove of shouting, jostling, hauling, mauling, swearing hackmen.

"This way, jintlemen!" exclaimed a brawny, red-nosed, whisky-smelling Irishman, catching Shanks by the arm.

"Sure, here's Dennis McCarthy's hack right formin' you."

"Better slide off on your ear an' put a revenue stamp over your mouth, or some of the detectives will be snatchin' you bald-headed for a perambulating, crooked whisky distillery," said Ned, pushing him off.

"Don't you talk mid dose loavers und sheats, you shust come into mein leedle hack und I'll dake you to the Atlantic Garten or any blace you want to go," said a Teutonic aspirant, button-holeing Shorty, and nearly knocking him down with the smell of limburger cheese.

"Paddle off, ole Saur Kraut; yer smell's if some-thin' had crawled down yer an' died; better go wash your insides out with a bottle of cologne," said Shorty, humorously.

"Dis way gem'men, shuah dis darcy's ole mani-my used to nuss George Washington; I clare to goodness dat's so," said a woolly-headed moke, bustling to the front.

"I vote for George Washington's nuss," laughed Shorty, and they followed him to a hack drawn by a broken-eared, tricky-looking pair of nags.

"Dose plugs of your'n won't run away, will dey, uncle?" asked Shorty.

"Golly! no, sah; dose hosses got less foolishness dan colts, an' knows a heap better dan to do dat."

"Do dey kick?"

"Praise de lam! no, boss; dey wouldn't kick at a multiplication table, er a life 'surance man. Whar shall I tote you to, sah?" asked Sambo, as he closed the carriage door and mounted the box.

"Fifth Avenue Hotel, and make dem boneyards of yers git up and crawl," said Shorty.

They had only been driven a few blocks, when Shorty, who had been fastening the shawl-pin on to the end of his cane, quietly opened the front window of the hack, and sticking his cane out, managed to give one of the nags a sharp prod, without being noticed.

"Whoa, dere, you hoss—don't yer fool wid dis nigger—you heah?" exclaimed Sambo, as the horse suddenly dropped his head and let fly with his heels.

Shorty watched his chance, and a few minutes later prodded them both again. He could do this easily without attracting attention, owing to the dashboard entirely hiding him from the driver's view.

This time there was a sudden stoppage of the hack, and a fearful clattering of heels against the front of the vehicle, that threatened to reduce it to fire wood.

"Dat'll do, dat'll do, you four-legged debble dat you is. I'ze gwine ter jess lam yer foah dis carryin' on, suah," yelled Sambo, as he climbed up on top of the hack, to keep from being kicked on the shins, nor could he be persuaded to descend. In this comical manner they drove up to the entrance of the hotel to the great amusement of the guests who were looking out of the windows.

The next day, Shorty and his chum, Shanks, devoted to business; driving down in the morning to the Clipper and daily paper offices, Shorty inserted the following advertisement:

WANTED—A full minstrel company for a traveling season of nine months. Must be A No. 1 at the business. To such will be offered most liberal inducements. Address immediately,

SHORTY, Box No. 40, Clipper office.

From there they made the rounds of the different theatrical agencies, inspecting their list of professionals wishing engagements, and left word for a few first-class artists to call upon them.

Returning to the hotel, they put themselves outside of a royal old dinner, lit their cigars and strolled down Broadway. Calling into a swell tailor's, they left their measures for a stunning outfit, to be delivered at the hotel the following day.

"Now, les' us take a scoot down-town an' have a sorter look at some slashin' ole properties," suggested Shorty, hailing a hack, and they were soon driven to one of the largest importers and manufacturers of theatrical and minstrel goods in the city, where our little friend gladdened the heart of the proprietor by the liberality of his order.

In the evening they scooped in a theater, and after a racket around the city, returned to the hotel and retired for the night.

The second morning brought Shorty half a bushel of applications for positions in the new company; these he read carefully, selected such as he thought possessed the requisite amount of talent, and appointed an hour on the day following for a morning rehearsal, in costume, at the Theater Comique.

The next day, Shorty, attired in a full suit of swell clothes, with a shiny plug hat and a gold-headed cane, strutted into the theater at the hour named, and found a motley crowd of professionals and amateur aspirants awaiting his inspection and examination. Amongst the former he was surprised to perceive Charley Pettengill, of the old troupe, who had been sent down by the other crowd to spot how Shorty was getting on, and report to them.

"Now, den, Sambo, what's yer best grip?" asked Shorty, of an awkward-looking specimen of an amateur, who, dressed in a half-minstrel, half-jockey rig, was staring around him open-mouthed.

"I see come in from de country, boss, to see 'bout being yer end man."

"Well, les' see yer shake yerself."

"I ain't got the ager."

"You chatter 'nuff to hev it."

"Dat's der fault of my mouf, boss."

"Well, open it den, an' lemme hear yer squeal," said Shorty.

"I didn't apply for to be a pig, so I can't squeal."

"Haven't yer got er voice?"

"Yaas, I s'got a voice like a he owl, my old dad used to say."

"Toot up, den."

"Somfin' lively, Is'pose?"

"You bet."

"How's dis, den?"

"Dar was dree crows
Sat on a tree
As black as ever
Crows could—"

"Dat'll do, Sambo, you can get," said Shorty, sticking his fingers in his ears.

"Get how?" inquired the applicant for minstrel honors.

"Climb."

"I ain't a climber, boss; I s' a singer."

"Mosey."

"Who's he?"

"Dust out," said Shorty.

"Well, give us a broom, and I'll tidy up."

"One—two—three, bounce!" exclaimed Shorty, grabbing him by the slack of the breeches and the back of the neck, running him out of the door and shooting him down a flight of stairs.

"Whar d'you figger in der show?" asked Shorty next, of a big, pot-bellied, plantation-looking moke, who had been looking stupidly on.

"I'll fit mos' anywhere, jedge; but if you want to see me come out strong, gimme de bones and lemme warble."

"Speel, then," said Shorty, leaning back on his cane, and assuming a critical air.

"Well, how's this suit you, jedge?" asked the applicant, seating himself on a stool, rattling the bones, and singing in a voice that would raise the shingles of a roof.

"If you want me to sing and dance in your fly-by-night show, and you'll pay me handsomely, I don't mind if I go. But I want the 'ghost to walk' in advance; you may laugh, but I've tried. And you'll find that I'm a square bloat, and neither 'ham' or snide."

"As dis ain't goin' ter be any fly-by-night show, yer can skip," said Shorty.

"Don't want me, then?"

"Nix, want; light out."

"Don't suit you, it 'pears?"

"No; so wipe off yer chin an' skedaddle."

"I'd just as leave work cheap, jedge."

"Button up yer Ulster an' paddle off," advised Shorty.

"Mebbe you'd like to see me shuffle?"

"Shuffle out of 'ere."

"You ought to see me and my lame brother, Ike, pitching quoits; don't you want something of that kind in your show?"

"One—two—three, bounce!" said Shorty, as he fired the applicant out, and listened to him go bumping down the stairs.

"Nex," he said, coming back on to the stage.

"Dat's not my name, boss, but I'll answer for luck," said a bright, light-built, gaily-togged young fellow, stepping to the front.

"Dat's more like it; I'll bet yer ain't none of dem duffers. What's yer best snap?" asked Shorty, looking admiringly at the new claimant, who stood before him cool and collected, and with that air of ease and confidence only acquired by those who have been before the footlights for some time.

"Oh, I'm bigger dan a government jackass at the song and dance biz."

"Slide in, den," said Shorty.

"You may have heard of Dionisius Snodgrass, The India-rubber darcy from the South; He could turn a double flip-flop on his eyebrow, Or run his head and heels way down his mouth. You may all think he's been misrepresented, Don't be deceived, he stands before you now; So, if you wish to doubt the words I've told you, Why, I'll do de old time essence on my brow.

Others have to take a seat
When they see that I'm so neat;
And say that I'm the best they ever met,
For I'm Dionisius Snodgrass from Callina,
And something on the song and dance, you bet."

"How'll that suit you, little one? I knows another verse of it," said the song and dance man, coming around with an artistic twirl.

"Dat's solid as der Brooklyn Bridge. Spit out t'other verse," said Shorty.

"I've seen Jim Crow and Nicodemus Johnson,
And old Black Joe along with Pompey Moore;
I met them down upon the old plantation,
When we'd gathered all upon the kitchen floor.
They played the tambourine, the bones and banjo,
And hill and dale re-echoed with their joy;
But when it came to acrobatic dancing,
They had to yield the palm unto this boy."

"You'll do, buckshot; drop up ter der Fifth Avenuer Hotel to-night, an' sign der papers, for sta'!" said Shorty.

"I'll be on hand," said the other, going out through the scenes.

Shorty devoted the next two hours to the examination of applicants, who kept putting in an appearance, and after bouncing a small regiment of duffers, wound up that evening by securing a red-hot rustling old crowd.

CHAPTER II.

SHORTY found himself busier than a hive of bees for the first few days after engaging his company. There was a place of amusement to be secured, new scenery to be painted, posters to be struck off, advertisements to be given out, a programme to be selected, rehearsals to be held, and a name to be chosen, and the quotation of "the last to be first" held good in this instance, for the next morning, as they were seated in the smoking-room of the hotel, talking over their programme for the day, Shanks suddenly inquired:

"By the way, Shorty, how're you goin' to call that slam bang crowd of yours?"

"You bet, pard, dat most of that gang'll come quick 'nuff 'thout callin'," specially 'bout chuck time an' pay day," replied Shorty, blowing a smoke wreath in the air.

"Sugar! I mean how're 'you goin' to christen 'em?"

"Dey're mummies and daddies looked out for all dat, I guess."

"Hang it, Shorty, you know what I mean," laughed Ned, punching him in the ribs with his cane. "What're they going to be known by?"

"By der size of dere feet, der beauty of dere complexions, an' der willingness ter accept a treat."

"You be blowed! How're you goin' to put 'em down on the bills?" asked Ned, tossing his half-smoked cigar out of the window, much to the disgust of a foppish young fellow, who caught it on the tip of his nose.

"Pay as we go—won't run up any."

"I mean the posters."

"Oh, yer want ter be posted?"

"Yes, without being stuck up or vain."

"Well, yer would have ter be purty sharp at fencing or you'd get pasted in der back."

"Then I'd get my back up and paste him in the ear," laughed Ned.

"Dat might do on de Erie road, but 'twouldn't pan out worth a cent on der route we're goin' to strike," replied Shorty.

"But, in short, about this name for the company."

"Shorty—not Short."

"Fiddle-dee-dee, if 'twill suit you," said Ned. "No, a fiddle wouldn't suit me. Banjo's my holt."

"Come, name the gang."

"Keep yer shirt on for a minute an' I'll show yer how we'll name 'em," said Shorty, tearing a sheet of paper into six slips, and handing three to his chum. "Scratch down three names on dose papers, an' I'll do der same on dese."

"All right; here you are, little one," said Ned, a moment later.

"Chuck 'em all in dis stove pipe hat of mine; now here's luck to der"—Shorty paused, put his hand into the hat, drew out a slip, opened it and read aloud: "New York Minstrels."

"Rip, slam, bang, and three times three and a tiger to the new company!" exclaimed Shanks.

"Der child is born an' it's name is New York Minstrels, an' if it only takes arter its namesake, dere will be dead loads of fun always ter be had," said Shorty.

"Let's drink to his prosperity in some sparkling champagne," suggested Ned, springing up.

"I'm wid yer," said Shorty, flicking the white ashes from his cigar and touching an immense dog under the tail, that was being led around by a pompous old gentleman.

Then ensued a scene of the wildest confusion; the dog gave a frightful ear-splitting yelp, plunged madly forward, scooped a mouthful out of a colored waiter's leg, and brought the old gentleman down on his knees with a force that shook his false teeth out on the floor. The waiter howled and danced around on one foot, and the old gentleman got up, swore like a madman, and pulled on the chain; but the dog braced his feet, reared back and barked savagely, then he came forward abruptly, and the old gentleman turned a back somersault, and kicked a bootblack under the ear, while the dog amused himself by tasting everybody that his chain would permit him to reach.

Some of the people whose legs he had sampled tried to revenge themselves by kicking a hole in the brute, but it was remarked that they never tried it twice, but left immediately after the attempt, with anger in their faces, and fresh teeth holes in their pantaloons.

Shorty, who had scrambled up on top of a table after starting the racket, was an amused spectator of the scene and kept up a running fire of jokes and suggestions, which, however, the spectators failed to appreciate, their whole minds, energies and activity being concentrated upon keeping out of the way of the snapping cur.

"Ouch! Lordy! hang your darned dog; he's eaten a pound of my leg!" screamed a fat, bald-headed man, crawling out from under the table, where he had hid, and hitting a quiet, inoffensive little looker on a blow on the nose, under the impression he was the owner of the dog.

"What in Dutch blazes are you hitting me for?" screamed the little man, wiping the blood from his nose, rolling up his sleeves and pitching into his bald-headed antagonist.

"Oh, Mister, don't yer want ter buy a dog?" shouted Shorty, dancing a breakdown on the table.

"I wish he'd bite your ugly head off, you infernal little runt!" exclaimed a thin-legged youth, as he climbed up on a chair and examined his bitten calves.

"One puppy allus growls an' bites 'nuther un, spider legs," replied Shorty.

"Whoop! blue blazes! take him off! take him off!" bawled a fresh victim, kicking out as fast and wickedly as a trick mule in a circus.

"Whoa, snort! Ain't he a beauty?" said Shorty, as the brute rushed between another man's legs and tumbled him head first into a spittoon, wheeled about, carried away a large portion of a gentleman's pantaloons and wound up by tangling a couple more up with his chain and then biting them at his leisure.

"Great caterpillars! won't somebody cut me open!" bawled the owner of the dog, struggling to pick up his false teeth, hold on his hat, pull away the dog and find out who was kicking him behind all at once.

"Ki-yi! ki-yi! ki-yudle! 'ere's a purty ring-tailed roarin' pet fur sum feller ter take home ter his gal," called out Shorty, bouncing off the table, poking the snapping dog in the ribs with his cane, and with a "da da, gem'men," he swaggered out followed by Shanks, and made his way to the bar-room, where they drank to the success of the "New York Minstrels" in foaming glasses of sparkling iced champagne. Then lighting fresh cigars they sauntered down Broadway, where they attracted no end of attention by the difference in their size, Ned Shanks being fully six feet tall, while our hero, Shorty, was but little more than half of that.

"Hi, cully, luk at de Si'mese twins!" shouted a newsboy.

"Cheese it, de little onè's Charley Ross growed up, an' de big one's de Gran' Juke 'Lexis!" yelled another.

"Dis is a heap too much of a free lunch exhibition ter suit dis hair-pin; les' bounce a coach," suggested Shorty, and they hailed a passing hack, and drove down to the different newspaper offices, left their advertisements, made arrangements for their show-bill printing, and devoted the rest of the day to looking up a place of amusement, in which to hold their opening performance.

That evening Shorty and his friend retired early, but were kept awake the biggest part of the night by the squalling of a baby in the next room, which was occupied by a ponderous Tentonic Philadelphia alderman and his family.

"Confound that little cub, I wish it was back in

Philadelphia, Germany, or heaven," remarked Shanks, on being woke up for the twentieth time. Shorty, are you 'wake?"

"You bet; why dat blubberin' snoozer in dere would wake a ten days old corpse."

"There ain't much deaf and dummy 'bout 'im," said Shanks. "Can't you put up a racket on the old salsage-eater, an' hyst 'im out of 'ere?"

"Jess hold yer breath till ter-morrow an' 'f I don't put up a job on Dutchy dat'll make 'im waltz back ter Philadelphia on his ear yer can pick me up for a butter-fingered muf," replied Shorty, burying his head in the pillows.

"Bully for you, Shorty! give 'im the grand Yankee Doodle bounce," muttered his chum, drowsily, and the sleepy god slipped in and pulled down their eyelids.

The next morning Shorty and his friend were standing in the office of the hotel, before starting out for a ramble, when the alderman strutted in, puffed out like an overgrown toad with his own importance, and approaching the clerk, said:

"Mine fren, I expect 'ome beoples to call mit somedings I pought. Ven dey comes shoost make dem go ride up to mine room, for sta?"

"Very good, sir."

"I suppose you don't often haf von alterman boarding at dis hotel?" he inquired loftily.

"It's a great honor, I'm sure, and we're awfully thankful," said the clerk, sarcastically, winking at Shorty. "Is there anything that we can do for your honor?"

"Vell, you mlde shust dell der cook dat I vphant her to take a dumble and not cook any more of dem parley voo dishes for dinner, put to shust poil some goot blood budding und saur kraut for der beoples."

"It shall be attended to."

He was rolling away when Shorty tackled him, and cocking his eye up comically, said:

"Is yer Mister Hans Von Sprecken der great Philadelphia alderman?"

"Dot ish my name, leedle feller, und I bees brood of it," replied the alderman, halting, and looking down at him with an air of immense superiority.

"An' you're de ham dat roosts in room Number 27?"

"Yah, me und mine frou und paby occubles dot room."

"Nice baby, dat; got a purty voice," coddled Shorty.

"Yes, dot paby is der peaudifullest leedle ding ever vas. Everybody dalks mit me und says he is shoost der image of me."

"I'll tell yer what'd be a bully good thing ter do wid 'im."

"What ish dot, mine friend?"

"Why, let his ears grow and make a Dutch jack-ass out of 'im—he's got der voice already," said Shorty, and he walked off amidst the shouts of laughter of the bystanders, who had been listening to the conversation, leaving the alderman the picture of horrified amazement and indignation.

"If that old beer-tub ain't got more gall than a bull-dozin' alligator. You'd think he was a Thanks-givin' turkey to see him strut round," laughed Shanks, overtaking his friend.

"Jest freeze fast to yerself, pard, an' keep yer eyes peeled for a racket dat'll make 'em get up an' howl," said Shorty, and hailing a stage they rode down town to the Astor House, from where Shorty wrote off and dispatched a boy to the different evening newspapers, with the following advertisement:

"WANTED IMMEDIATELY.—Half a dozen first-class Monkeys, for which a liberal price will be paid. Those accustomed to the organ-grinding profession preferred."

"Inquire for HANS VON SPRECKEN, Fifth Avenue Hotel."

"Dere, if dat don't fetch 'im yer can call me a marine," said Shorty, as the boy dusted away.

"You've struck the bulls-eye this time, chum. Great beeswax! but won't old sassingers be hoppin'?" exclaimed Shanks tumbling to Shorty's little game, and smelling heaps of fun ahead.

After transacting some business and completing their arrangements for an opening performance at a Broadway theater they strolled slowly up town, dropping in at a billiard hall. They knocked the balls around for an hour or so, much to the amusement of some young plums that were playing at another table, as Shorty's head hardly reached above the cushion.

"He ought to have a pair of stilts," remarked one of them, finally, thinking he was picking up a flat.

"I don't want 'em no wuss than yer do a new set of brains; those yer got seems purty well played out," retorted Shorty, promptly.

"Somebody ought to put a plaster on him and try and draw him out," suggested a second.

"If der aldermen and common scoundrels knowed yer was floatin' round loose dey'd charter a pile-driver, drive yer inter der mud up ter yer neck, leave yer ears stickin' out ter tie ships ter, an' save yer folks from payin' yer funeral expenses," answered Shorty, as he chalked his cue after scoring a run of twenty.

"Whew, what a little porcupine!" said the first speaker.

"You'd better chalk yer head an' stand yerself up in der rack for a cue; it's a better biz dan tater peelin' for a five cent hash-house," replied Shorty, and as the other fellow was tall and thin, this raised a roar of laughter at his expense.

"Tom Thumb's granddaddy on his muscle," remarked the other speaker.

"You would have ter skip up to der Central Park an' look in der monkey's cage ter find yer granddaddy, though dere's a strong famerly resemblance 'tween yer," said Shorty, and the lookers-on laughed again and clapped their hands, while the other crowd, feeling they had stirred up a hornet's nest, stuck up their cues and slunk away.

After playing another game Shorty and his friend Shanks went out, and hailing a stage rode up to the hotel and went up stairs to their room to fix up a little before supper.

They had not been in their room over ten minutes when they heard somebody rap at the alderman's door and heard him demand:

"Who ish dere?"

"It is me, *monseieur*, wiz ze nicest, jolliest little monkey for zou," answered a voice outside, and Shorty and Shanks flew to their door and peeping out discovered a little Frenchman holding a monkey in his arms.

"Dot ish nien for me, go rite oud der house," said the alderman, opening the door and getting very red in the face.

"*Monsieur avez vous ze name Hans Von Sprecken?*" asked the Frenchman politely.

"Yaw, dat ish my name."

Then the Frenchman bowed, smiled, shrugged his shoulders, set down his monkey and was making him go through his performance, when the alderman slammed the door shut in his face, and could be heard jawing and storming around the room.

Just then here was another rap, and in answer to the alderman's bell a voice was heard:

"Plaze sur, cum out here an' take your pick of these two monkeys."

"*Himmel donner wetter!* dis ish vonderfu!"

"Come hustle yerself along 'ere, old Sprecken-krot, or whatever your name is, an' take a squint at my ring-tailed monkey," said another voice.

"*Mine Gott in Himmel!* have I gone crazy mit mine brains?" said the alderman, tumbling and frothing around the room.

"Where's dat old snoozer, speckled trout, that wants to buy a monkey?" bawled another one, coming up.

"Fetch him out."

Then the alderman threw open the door, and found himself face to face with a score of dirty, lubberly organ-grinders, each armed with a chattering, grinning monkey.

"You retches und schamps!"

"I was here fust, sir; let me show you my monkey," yelled one.

"Mine's a bob-tailed one," screamed another.

"Zis pretty zittle one can dance and jump," said an old crone, showing an immense monkey in a red cap and soldier jacket into the alderman's arms.

"By tam! you nien go ride oudt, I'll call der bolice und makes droubles mit you."

"Oh, cheese it, Dutchy; we don't want any speech."

"How much are you going to give us for our monkeys?"

"Feel this old monkey, and see how fat he is."

"Just look at this little beauty with pink eyes."

"'Ere's der won yer want, ole swell head," said a short-haired rough, elbowing his way to the front and hauling an enormous, mangy, scarred and devilish-looking baboon after him by a chain.

Then the alderman got up and tried to explain that he didn't want any monkeys; but, between his excitement and badly broken English, the crowd, which now filed the hall and half way down the staircase, could not understand him, and kept putting their monkeys into his room to exhibit till the floor was covered with them; and his wife, with the squalling baby in her arms, was forced to climb up on top of the bureau to prevent being overrun by them.

"You shwindlers, und schamps, und loavers, und plackguards, und wredches, if you don't schtep oudt I'll budt a head mit you und hoostle you away miday soon quick," threatened the now frantic alderman, kicking madly and wildly at the monkeys that were dancing around him, climbing up his legs, grinning at him from the chairs, turning somersaults in his bed, jabbering at him from the mantle-piece, hanging on to his coat-tails, swinging from the chandeliers and window-curtains, and upsetting things on the table and washstand.

"Don't yer kick my monkey, old limburger!" roared one of the crowd at the door.

"Bad cess to ye for an ill-mannered Dutchman, to hurt a poor widder's little monkey," screamed an old woman, trying to scratch his face.

"I'll kick ther hull top of yer head off 'f you don't shake me out a tenner, yer old Belzebug, dere," said the owner of the baboon, who was engaged at that moment in shaking the alderman's gold watch, which he had picked up off the table.

The alderman mounted a chair and tried to be heard, but the chattering and jabbering of the monkeys, the cries of his baby, the prayers of his



The goat butted Brother Zedekiah over an ash-barrel and then went for Brother Enoch. Shorty and Shank's stood enjoying the racket.

wire, and the shouts of the people way down in the lower part of the hall, who were struggling to get forward in order to make a sale of their monkeys, which they carried, drowned his voice so that not a single word could be heard.

"Give me back my monkey, if you don't want him."

"Here's a spotted one, sur."

"Pass this one up for the gentleman to see."

"Sure, it's Mike Muldooney that's got the baste to suit yer honor."

"Why don't you pay us for our monkeys and let us go?"

"Vill ze gentilhommie condescend to let his eyes rest on my Italian monkey?"

"Tarep-an-ouns! here's a bald-headed monkey from Tipperary."

"If you don't pass that monkey of mine out to me I'll come in and kick the Dutch stuffing out of you."

"What're you tryin' ter give us? wind puddin', hey?"

"Do you want us to trust yer for the monkeys?"

In vain the alderman fumed, swore, plead, beseeched, begged, scolded, raved, shouted, gesticulated, jawed and roared, the crowd taunted, jostled and crowded towards him till he finally slammed the door shut, locked it, and opening the front window, commenced tossing the jabbering, long-tailed monkeys out on the sidewalk, to the astonishment of the passers-by and the infinite amusement of the guests of the hotel, who had smelt a rat and were on the lookout.

Two policemen had to be summoned, and spent half an hour clearing the passage of the enraged owners of the monkeys, who departed swearing eternal vengeance on Alderman Hans Von Sprecken, and an hour later that wrathful personage had packed his things, shook the dust of New York off his feet, and was rushing back to the city of Quakers as fast as the owl train of the Pennsylvania Central would carry him.

Shorty and Shanks, who during the hubbub had been writhing and rolling around their room with pillows before their mouths to keep their laughter from being heard, made their appearance shortly after his departure, and the fact that the former was the originator of the racket they had just witnessed getting wind, our little hero found himself the observed of all observers.

The next morning's sun looked down upon the fences and bill-boards of the old city glittering and gay as rainbows, with the posters of the New York Minstrels, while the papers teemed with columns

of double-headed advertisements, setting forth the strength and talent of the new troupe; and the *Herald* and all the other papers, getting hold of Shorty's monkey racket, published it in full, so that when the curtain went up on the opening performance, Shorty found the house jammed, and not even standing room could be had.

The performance was a success in every sense of the word. The programme was one, which had been especially selected by Shorty; the songs, acts, and jokes were all of the freshest of the fresh, and were received with shouts of laughter and thunders of applause. Some of the old San Francisco gang, who had taken up prominent positions through the house, so as to be able to hiss any shortcoming or failure that might occur, turned green with envy as they saw the new company storm the hearts and affections of their audience at a single bound, and occupy the place they had once held.

But the climax was reached when Shorty bounded upon the stage in his character of a monkey. His late monkey racket came vividly to the minds of his audience, and his reception was more than enthusiastic—it was an ovation, and when he had seized his banjo, and perching himself upon the back of a chair, commenced:

"Oh, my name is Sassy Sam,
An' I see no alderman."

his audience shouted and applauded themselves hoarse.

Act followed act with perfect smoothness, and nearly all the leading performers were called before the curtain to receive their well-earned applause.

Taken altogether, the opening night of the New York Minstrels was a brilliant one; and, when the curtain descended for the last time that evening, it left the company firmly planted on the top rung of the ladder of minstrelsy.

"Rip! slam! bang! Shorty, old pard, let me congratulate you!" exclaimed Ned Shanks, rushing into his dressing-room and grabbing him by the hand.

"Well, I sorter guess we're all hunk. Golly! what a house we had."

"Wasn't room for a baby mosquito," replied Shanks; "that monkey racket up at the hotel's what made the hit."

"Well, der gang all done jest bully; dere wasn't a muf or duffer 'mongst 'em. Lordy, won't dem San Francisco hamfatters get up on der ear an' howl when dey see dis ole crowd of ours go a snort-

tin' ter der front," laughed Shorty, and having paid a visit to the box-office and learned the amount taken in, which was over double what they had expected to realize, Shorty and Shanks started off up to their hotel.

CHAPTER III.

THE morning following the opening performance of the New Minstrel Troupe, in which they had so completely carried the play-going public of New York by storm, the daily papers of the metropolis blazed out with glowing accounts and flattering criticisms of the show, and there is no doubt but crowded houses and enthusiastic audiences would have greeted them nightly had they remained to the end of the season; this, however, was impossible, as Shorty had made arrangements and billed the city, through his advance agent, for their appearance in Philadelphia during the ensuing week.

"Well, Shorty, old boy, how do you pan out this morning?" inquired Shanks, the following morning, as they were dressing themselves.

"Hunkydory, on a half shell," replied Shorty, as he ducked his head into a basin of water.

"I was 'fraid you wouldn't snooze any, 'cause you didn't have that Dutch baby to sing you to sleep."

"I wonder if der alderman's got suited in a monkey, yet?" laughed Shorty.

"You bet your high old muckey-muck that he won't have the cheek to look a monkey in the face for the next ten years solid."

"Cheek, why dat ole snoozer's got cheek 'nuff ter make a roof for a hen-house," replied Shorty.

"An' he'll have ter drown dat Dutch baby of his if he ain't goin' ter look a monkey in der face."

"Oh, give us a rest, pard," chuckled Shanks. "By the way, when do you propose to steer out of here?"

"We'll slide off on our ears to-night for Philamer-clink."

"Bully for that!"

"I s'pect der alderman'll give us a reception at his club," said Shorty, leading the way down stairs.

"I guess he'll give you a reception with a hickory club, if he catches you."

Entering the dining-room of the hotel they seated themselves at one of the tables, ordered breakfast, and were looking over the complimentary notices of the show in different journals, when a bride and groom, fresh from the country, and passing through

the city on their honeymoon, entered and seated themselves at the next table.

"Much 'bliged, Mister, but I sorter reckon Jerusha an' I won't read nothin' till after we get some vittles into us," remarked the groom to the waiter, who handed him a bill of fare.

"This is a menu for breakfast, sir," said the waiter, politely, while Shorty, who had been watching them over the top of his paper, dodged down behind it and grinned.

"Du tell; wai I guess I won't have any of it today anyhow; it looks too much like paper for me to chaw on."

"It's not to eat, sir, it is the bill of fare for you to look over and select your dishes."

"Wall, you tell Billy Fair that Jerusha an' I ain't a bit stuck up or 'tickular 'bout the dishes; you can fetch us our grub on plates, if you're short of crockery in the kitchen."

"What shall I bring you, sir?" asked the waiter, giving up all further attempt to make him understand the bill of fare.

"Mine's slap-jacks an' 'lasses to commence with."

"Slap, what, sir?"

"Slap-jacks, an' tote 'em in soon as you can, for Jerusha an' I feel kinder grub-struck."

"I'm afraid we haven't got them on the bill of fare," remarked the waiter.

"Wall, Mister, you just tell Billy Fair that Gamaliel Jones, of Hopperville, says fur him to send him out some corn doggers an' 'skins for two empty critters to pile into 'em," he remarked to the waiter, then turning to his wife as the waiter departed, he added, "I'll be dog-goned, Rushy, if this bein't the first hotel ever I struck where they didn't keep slap-jacks."

The waiter returned in a few moments with a nicely-served breakfast for two, which he set before them and departed, and the pair set to work with an appetite that proved he had not exaggerated when he described himself and wife as empty.

Shorty and Shanks, who had overheard the conversation, had been shaking themselves with suppressed laughter, and the former had been thinking how he could have a racket at their expense when an opportunity suddenly presented itself.

"I wonder, Rushy, which of these gimcrack bottles is got the termater catchup in?" inquired the groom, after a few moments.

"Laws, Gammy I how d'you spect I know," answered his wife.

"Won't yer try some of dis, squire?" asked Shorty, snatching up a bottle of cayenne sauce and handing it to him.

"Much 'bliged. I don't keer 'fi do," said the groom. "I'm the all firedest feller arter tomatersauce ever was."

"Dat ain't exactly termater, but it's a red hot ele sauce; jest taste it," observed Shorty.

The groom drew the cork out with his thumb-nail and tilting the bottle up to his lips swallowed a couple of good mouthfuls in rapid succession, and the next minute his wife was surprised to see him drop the bottle, spring wildly from the table and commence prancing around the floor.

"Oh, Gammy, dear, what is the matter?" she exclaimed, as she saw him jump over a table, kick over a chair and paw the air wildly with his arms.

"Jump-ing Ge-hos-ophat!" he yelled, after draining half a dozen tumblers of water.

"Oh, Gammy, tell your own little wife!"

But the words died on her lips as she saw him peel off his best coat, dance on it, and then glare around with bloodshot eyes, while he kept exclaiming:

"Where is he? Show him to me!"

"Please be quiet, sir," said a waiter.

"Quiet the devil, man. I'd like to see you be quiet with a belly full of red-hot fire!" he exclaimed, sucking in a great mouthful of air.

"Oh, Gamaliel, you swearer," said his wife, who concluded he had gone crazy.

"Oh, fetch him tu me till I run him through a thrashing-machine."

"Is there anything we can do for you, sir?" asked a waiter, deferentially.

"Yes, yes; go an' hunt up a fire-engine an' get 'em to play down my throat," he replied. "Oh, Rushy, if I only had hold of that fellow, how I'd scrunch him."

"Who is it you're looking for, sir?"

"That bob-tailed little runt that set there a moment ago grinnin'. He's the serpent that give me that chain-lightning to drink. Where is he now, till I shrive him up?" he shouted, shaking his fist at the chair Shorty had quietly vacated after starting the racket.

It took his wife and four waiters half an hour to quiet him down, get his insides cooled off, and persuade him to put on his coat, and he left the room rubbing his stomach and vowing to pulverize that infernal little runt the first time he laid eyes on him.

The laughter indulged in by the guests of the hotel, when they heard of Shorty's fresh racket, lasted till our little hero and his friend had taken their departure for the train that evening.

On their arrival at the Pennsylvania Railroad depot they found the rest of the company awaiting them, and having secured seats by themselves, in one of the cars, they were soon being whirled away towards the City of Brotherly Love and broad brims.

When they had got fairly under way, Shorty left

the balance of the company, who were amusing themselves and the rest of the passengers in the car with jokes and snatches of negro melodies, and rambled through the train to see what were the prospects of some fun. He was passing through the last car, when he noticed a party of a dozen or so clergyman seated together, one of whom called to him:

"Pause, youth!"

Shorty stopped and eyed the minister, who was a tall, stern-featured, harsh-looking man in a white neck-handkerchief and blue spectacles.

"Unregenerate son of Adam, dost thou belong on this train?"

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't, ole prayin' machine," answered Shorty, comically. "An' how d'yer find out my ole dad's name was Adam?"

"Beware, unrepentant Phillistine," groaned another.

"Verily, verily shall the scoffer's days be numbered," moaned a third.

"Oh, chalk your chins; what did you scoff for supper?" said Shorty, and he was starting away, when another of the party who had not yet spoken, beckoned to him, and explained that they were a jury of clergymen going on to Philadelphia to attend the trial of Brother Slyboots, which was to take place that evening, and they were anxious to telegraph their brethren in Philadelphia that they were on their way so that they could meet them on their arrival.

"Yer jest leave all dat ter me, pard; fork over der address, an' I'll flash der glad tidings 'long der wires. I ain't sich an awful wicked pill's I looks ter be," said Shorty, who saw an opening for a tremendous racket ahead.

The clergyman handed him the address, and at the next station Shorty jumped off and telegraphed ahead:

"BROTHER LOOKEOUT: We are coming, Father Abraham, we will be in the first car of train."

"BROTHER SKIDDYMDINK."

Then Shorty went back into the last car, where the pious crowd were seated, and told them he had telegraphed to their friends that they would find them in the last car, and that they were to remain fast in their seats on their arrival in Philadelphia till their friends came for them; this they promised to do, and Shorty rushed back into the front car, where the troupe were keeping everybody around them in a roar with their comicallies, and whispered to them the racket he had prepared and which he desired them to take part in.

A couple of hours later the train steamed into the depot at Philadelphia, and a sanctimonious, long-faced man opened the car door, and inquired:

"Is my dear Brother Skiddymdink and his party within the sound of my voice?"

"They ist," replied Shorty, nudging Shanks and winking at the rest of the gang to follow him.

"Dost I shake flippers wid Brother Lookout?" asked Shorty, giving the minister's hand a squeeze that brought the tears into his eyes.

Fortunately for the success of Shorty's racket, none of the visiting brethren were known personally by those they were coming to confer with, so that the Reverend Lookout hastened to lead the way to some carriages he had in waiting, and the party drove away leaving the real clergymen sitting patiently in the train awaiting their friends.

"The brethren and sisters are all congregated in the Hall of Judea, and await but our arrival to commence the trial," said Lookout, who was in the carriage with Shorty and Shanks.

"An' what's yer 'pinion 'bout brother Slyboot's guilt?" asked Shorty, determined to pump the dominie and find out something about what the trial was held for.

"Ah, my dear brother, I fear he has panted after the flesh an' fallen by the wayside. Sister Rachel, his wife, has testified that she saw him kiss the cook twice, with her own eyes."

"Oh, it's for kissing the cook, is it?" thought Shorty, and a few minutes later the carriages drew up before the Hall of Judea, and Shorty and the gang, putting on their longest faces, followed their guide into the building, which they found full of vinegary-looking old maids and white neck-tied ministers.

The meeting was immediately called to order as soon as the new party had taken their seats, and one of the preachers having whined through the charges, another stern, bald-headed shouter arose and inquired if any of the brethren desired to put any questions.

"You bet, baldy," said Shorty. "Was der gal he kissed purty good-lookin'?"

"She was comely to the eye, Brother Skiddymdink."

"Nebber mind 'bout her combs or bustles; was she purty as a peach?"

"Was she peaches and cream?" asked Shanks.

"Yea, verily, the damsel was pretty," said the bald-headed shouter.

"Den I say it'd have been a dam-sell if he hadn't kissed her," said Shorty, emphasizing one of the words in his reply.

The old maids in the gallery held up their hands in pious horror. Mrs. Slyboots went off into hysterics, and the clergymen opened their astonished ears and eyes.

"I move ter acquit him, if he'll promise ter kiss her agin," continued Shorty.

"Bully for you, pard. I second the motion," said Shanks.

"All in favor, say aye," said Tambo, and the whole gang shouted "aye" with a voice that sounded like a hundred, and set the Reverend Slyboots' heart beating with joy.

The hall now became the scene of the wildest confusion; twenty different preachers sprang to their feet at once, and shouted, gesticulated, urged motions which nobody listened to, lost their tempers, and raved and stormed; the women screamed, yelled, shrieked and cried "amen;" finally, the bald-headed shouter managed to drown the rest, and raising his voice till it shook the glass in the windows, he bawled:

"Brethern and sisters, this outrageous and"—

"Go West an' hire a hall!" shouted Shorty.

"Pull down your vest, baldy!" exclaimed Shanks.

"Chalk your chin!" yelled another.

"Button up your ulster!"

"Take a tumble to your jawtackle!"

"Swim out, you're too fresh!"

"Put up the shutters on that mouth!"

"Give us a rest, old shiny top," yelled the gang, and the excitement became worse than ever when Shorty scrambled up on the back of a chair, and picking an imaginary banjo, sang:

"Oh, honey in de comb am very sweet,
But Slyboots' gal she was better.
So he put his arm around her waist,
And kissed her when he met her."

The gang came in with a barnyard chorus of their own, in which pigs squeaked, turkeys gobbled, hens cackled, dogs barked, cats miaowed, geese hissed, donkeys brayed, roosters crowed, and the confusion was at its height, when the door opened, and the real, genuine delegation of clergymen, who had been left seated in the car at the depot, entered, and Shorty and his gay, fun-loving gang, having had enough sport for one evening, took advantage of the door being open to steal silently out, leaving the brethren to explain matters as best they could, while they made their way to the Continental Hotel, where rooms had been engaged for them, and after a jolly laugh over their evening's adventures they retired.

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, the troupe separated, Shorty and Shanks lighting cigars and strolling up Chestnut Street, where their odd appearance and the former's comical mug caused every one who met them to smile, look back and smile some more.

They were turning out of Chestnut into Broad Street, when they suddenly came across two of the clergymen who had come on the night before with them in the cars.

"The follower of sin and Satan, Brother Zedekiah," moaned out one.

"A prompter of strife in the Hall of Judea," groaned the other.

"Hello, old shouters, how's dergal dat Brudder Slyboots kissed? Is she goin' to recover?"

"Hope your friends didn't keep you waiting long at the depot last night," said Shanks.

"They are emissaries of the evil one, Brother Zedekiah."

"And their touch is contamination, Brother Enoch."

"F'y you got a touch under der eye, old Uknock, I guess yer'd call it a black an' blue spot an' let der 'amination slide," said Shorty, pointing his cane straight at an immense, strong-smelling buck goat which was chewing some paper a few yards in the rear of the clergyman.

"A disciple of Beelzebub's, Brother Zedekiah."

"Yea, verily, Brother Enoch, they are dwellers in the camp of the ungodly."

"Guess you must have swallowed a dickshunary when you was a kid, and never got it up since," said Shorty, still teasing the goat by pointing his cane at him.

"Come, Brother Zedekiah, let us not longer tarry in the company of the profligates."

"Thou speakest wisely, Brother Enoch, lest our brethren in this goodly city"—

Just then Shorty managed to touch the old goat on his head with the tip of his cane, and the old fellow regarding that as a challenge of a pressing character, dropped his head and dashed forward. Shorty jumped to one side, and Brother Zedekiah, serenely unconscious of coming events, received the awful shock under his coat-tails, and immediately swam out into the air; and after butting over an ash barrel with his new silk hat, he picked himself up out of the gutter, wiped the mud out of his eyes, and looked around to see how it had all happened.

The goat in the meantime had transferred his attentions to Brother Enoch, and raising himself up on his hind legs, struck him square in the bread-basket hard enough to loosen his scalp. Brother Enoch undertook to run, but the goat overtook him a moment later, and butted him head first through a jewelry store window, and the proprietor rushing out collared him and held him fast till he forked out ten dollars to pay for the broken panes of glass, while Shorty and Shanks continued their walk, laughing heartily over the whole affair.

In the afternoon they got a carriage and drove around the city, visiting the Mint, Girard College



"I'll have satisfaction for this insult," screamed the frantic congressman. "Stuffed clubs for two, an' meet me by moonlight alone," retorted Shorty.

Farmount Park, the Navy Yard, and all points of interest, and returned to the hotel in time for dinner, well pleased with their day's sight-seeing and the clean and regularly laid-out streets of the Quaker City.

Shorty's original intention was to have opened at Fox's American Theater on Chestnut Street, but the total destruction of that magnificent variety show building by fire compelled him to look out for another place of amusement, and the New National Theater was finally selected.

The *Ledger* and other Philadelphia papers having copied Shorty's monkey racket with Alderman von Sprecken, and the latter official being a well-known character around the city, it proved an immense advertisement, the boys of Philadelphia flocking in by hundreds to have a peep at one they had heard so many funny stories about, so that when the curtain rose that evening, the New York Minstrels made their opening bow to a crowded house, who loudly applauded their every effort to entertain them.

The bill was a good one, and everything passed off as smoothly as a greased pig, till the close of the first part, when there was a universal shout for the hero of the monkey, and a hundred other rackets, to show himself, and finally finding it impossible for the performance to proceed until quiet was restored, Shorty jammed his hat under his arm and sticking his thumbs into his vest pockets strutted out before the footlights, bowed, and looking around the sea of faces with a comical grin on his mug, remarked:

"I ain't a very big thing for yer fellows ter make so much noise 'bout."

Then the crowd cheered, applauded, stamped their feet and clapped their hands, and Shorty was about bowing himself off the stage when a voice in the gallery exclaimed:

"By ther eternal gum an' beeswax, Rushy, if there aren't that goldarned little runt that got me to drink that infernal fire an' brimstone stuff."

Glancing up, Shorty recognized his acquaintance, Gamaliel Jones and his wife Jerusha, who had got as far as Philadelphia on their bridal tour, and concluded to pass the evening at the minstrel entertainment, little dreaming of meeting the joker who had played him such a red-hot trick in New York.

Of course the audience knew nothing of this, and shouts of "Put him out," "Sit down, greeny," "Got any apple sass?" "Hustle him out," greeted him on every side, making him wilder and angrier than ever.

"No, I won't set down, Rushy," he exclaimed

in answer to his wife's endeavors to keep him quiet. "Think I'm goin' tu let a gramin' little runt like that burn a hole in my vittle basket 'thout lammin' him?"

"Bounce him!" screamed one.

"Fire him out!" said another.

"Slide him off on his eyebrow," suggested a third.

"Tie him up in a knot, an' drop him out the window," yelled a boy.

"Roll him up in his ulster, and slide him down the coal chute," said another.

"Shave his head, and put him in a straight-jacket," advised a fresh voice.

"Bag his head, and sell him for country pork," chirped a fellow in the parquette.

"No; I'll be everlastingly durned if you'll shave my head!" exclaimed the now thoroughly frightened Jones, who thought every suggestion was about to be carried out, and seeing two ushers hastening down to where he was seated, he sprang to his feet, glanced wildly around and with a "Come on, Rushy, let's scramble," he climbed over the gallery, slid down one of the pillars and tore frantically through the passageway to the door, and away.

This was a scene not down on the bills, and the audience rightly conjecturing it was the result of some former racket of Shorty's, shouted and cheered themselves hoarse, and it was some moments before the song-and-dance man, who had made his appearance, could make himself heard.

Shorty's appearance in his monkey act was another signal for an outburst of applause such as Philadelphia audiences only give to their prime favorites. He had composed a new song full of local gags and hits at the alderman, which was received by the crowd with shouts of laughter, and received an encore so persistent that Shorty found himself forced to repeat it.

The rest of the performance passed off swimmingly, and when the curtain finally dropped on the last act, the immense crowd departed, laughing and well pleased all through with the New York Minstrels.

"Well, Shorty, my bird, that's another big chalk-mark for the crowd," remarked Shanks, as they walked slowly home after the performance.

"Yes, der gang done stavin'; dere ain't any sleepy snoozers 'mongst dese fellers, same as dere was 'mongst dat ole hamfat gang I used to travel wid," said Shorty.

"I thought I'd have keeled over and whooped right out when I squinted 'round the edge of the

curtain and seen old Country Jones a snortin' an' ravin' away in the gallery," laughed Shanks.

Stepping into a first class oyster-house on Chestnut Street they had some oysters, lit a couple of cigars and strolled forth again.

"How're you on rollin' ten pins Shorty?" asked Shanks, as they passed an alley gayly lit up.

"I allus was better rollin' der balls dan der ten-pins."

"You're right on the 'cod' this evening I see."

"Yer bet, pard, but I didn't mean codfish balls."

"Well, let's roll a game for the drinks?"

"I'm yer huckleberry," answered Shorty, leading the way into the hall and selecting an alley.

At the next alley to them were a couple of Philadelphia counter-jumpers, who commenced at once to poke fun at Shorty and Shanks' ill-matched appearance.

"You fellers better climb back ter der poor-house else yer'll get locked out," finally remarked Shorty, after some fresh taunt had been paid to his size.

"Don't you give us any of your lip, or we'll spank you, bantam," threatened one of them.

"Pity yer couldn't sell off some of yer lip, an' yer mouth wouldn't look so much like a hole a mule had kicked in yer head," said Shorty, dauntlessly.

"Let's box the brat's ears for him," suggested the other, both of whom seemed spoiling for a fight, and he was making a rush for Shorty, when the latter wheeled around and bowled his ten pin ball at him, hitting him on the shins and capsizing him head first into a waiter, who was hurrying past with a tray full of drinks, and the next minute they were both rolling around in the sawdust and broken glasses.

"Dat's a keno for ter-night, I guess," observed Shorty, as he saw the barkeeper snatch up a club, waltz out and commence lathering them both.

"Let's skip, pard."

"Skate off," said Shanks; and, having paid their bill, they started back to the Continental, talking over the events and adventures of the day.

CHAPTER IV.

CROWDED houses and well-pleased audiences greeted the New York Minstrels every night during their stay in Philadelphia, Shorty becoming a prime favorite with the boys of the Quaker City from the word "go," and as hardly a day passed but he was at the bottom of some fresh racket, his ap-

pearance on the stage or street was a sure sign of fun ahead.

"Do yer twig dat snuffin' ole broadbrim and his wife over dere?" asked Shorty, of his friend Shanks, as they were taking dinner the next day at the hotel.

"Do you mean old mealy-mouth at the second table, who's tryin' to gobble up his soup with a fork?"

"Yee up, dat's der shrimp."

"All O. K., I drop to him. Why?"

"Nodun" only he's der snorin' machine dat was funnin' all las' night," said Shorty.

"Well, darn his old mutton head. Why, he's worse than seven tom cats, a brass band, the itch and a sore toe," replied Shanks, as he sailed into the breast of a turkey.

"You bet he's a cuss at it."

"Don't think he's got an equal; why, he shook the tacks out of the carpet in our room," laughed Shanks.

"Some feller'd make a big stake if dey'd kidnap 'im, larn 'im ter snore tunes, an' den tote 'im roun' in a side show wid some snide circus," suggested Shorty.

"'Ei was his wife I'd just as soon be married to the steam whistle of a locomotive."

"I've seed lots of der shakin' Quakers, but I reckon dis ole snorter must be a snorin' Quaker, an' boss of der gang at dat."

"I guess I'll go out to Germantown and sleep to-night. I don't s'pose a feller would hear him bad ten miles away."

"Cheese it, pard. I'll racket 'im out of 'ere tomorrow, if I've eber been introduced ter myself, an' I think I 'ave."

"Bully for you, it'll be my treat an' your drink 'f you do," said Shanks, wondering how it was going to be accomplished.

That afternoon Shorty procured some fine silk twine, a couple of fish hooks and a handful of horse-hair; the latter he cut up into very fine pieces and watching his opportunity, when the snoring Quaker and his wife had gone out to the Friend's meeting, Shorty got Shanks to boost him up, and scrambling like a cat through the transom over the door, he was soon inside of the room.

"Golly, s'pose I should get copped in 'ere; dey'd jug me in Moyamensing Prison for a crib cracker 'fore I could turn a flip-flap," mused Shorty, as he hurried over to the bed, turned down the sheets, shook the fine-cut horse hair between them and replaced them again, then fastening his fish hooks through all the bed clothing at the foot of the bed, he led the fine silk twine up through the transom and into their own room.

"By hokey! dat was a tight ole squeeze of it," chuckled Shorty, when he had scrambled through the opening again. "Fide had a speck more corporation on my bread basket, I'd 'ave stuck fast up dere."

That night they hurried home from the theater, as soon as Shorty had done his monkey act, and going up to their room, lit cigars and waited quietly for the return of their snoring neighbor.

They had been in their room about ten minutes when they heard the old fellow come along the hall, unlock his door and enter.

"Rebecca, thou wilt have to remove thy raiment in the dark, as I am in ignorance of the manner by which light is obtained from this spigot," they heard him remark, after burning his fingers with a couple of matches, trying to light the gas without turning it on.

His wife made no reply, and after her husband had stumbled over a rocking-chair and nearly broken his toenail, he climbed into bed. They were quiet for about ten minutes, when she was heard to say:

"Nehemiah, dost thou sleep?"

"Nay, nay."

"I feareth, Nehemiah, that bugs and unseemly vermin inhabiteth this bed," she continued, scratching away at her legs.

Just then Shorty gave the string a pull, hauling the bed clothing off on to the floor.

"Then hast fidgeted the covering off the bed, Rebecca, with thy restlessness."

"Nay, Nehemiah, it was thee."

Then the old fellow was heard scrambling out of bed, colliding with the rocking-chair, bumping his shins against the wash-stand, and finally putting the clothes back on the bed.

"Oh, Nehemiah, sleep will not visit my eyes while these vermin tormenteth me."

"They flocketh upon my legs in droves, and glideth under my shirt," he replied.

Shorty and Shanks, who had been convulsed with laughter at the way the racket was working, stuffed their handkerchiefs in their mouths, and the former pulled the string again, and once more the bed clothing was stripped off the pair in the room opposite.

"Dost thou suffer from the heat that thou kickest the coverlids off?" asked the old lady.

"It was thee, woman," said her husband, scratching his legs like mad.

"Nay, I say 'twas thee," she contradicted, getting up and after groping around tossed the clothes back on the bed.

"Verily doth the vermin devour me," he exclaimed, raking his legs with his nails as the horse-hair tickled them.

Shorty yanked the clothing off the bed again, and

the old Quaker slammed his arms around to try and catch it, etching his wife a crack across the breast that nearly knocked the wind out of her.

"Art thou crazy, Nehemiah?" she gasped, sitting up in the bed and shaking him.

"Thou hadst better get a piece of ice and sit upon it if thee is so warm that thee canst not let the covering rest upon the bed," he exclaimed, angrily, as he tumbled out of bed once more after the bed clothing.

Shorty let him get back into bed and nicely settled, when he again hauled them off him.

"Rebecca, beware! There is fooling with thy best friend," he shouted, popping up in bed like a jack-in-a-box, and mad all over.

"It is unseemly and sinful for a man of thy years, Nehemiah, to flounce thyself around as thou dost."

"I will speak of thee to the elders."

"An' I'll speak of thee to the Friends."

"Thee is a fool," jawed old broadbrim, bounding out of bed, peeling his nose against the door jamb and tumbling the clothes back on the bed.

He had just got in and covered himself up, when Shorty snaked them off again, and the next minute there was a free fight in that room, as the Quaker, snatching after the departing clothes, missed them and grabbed his wife by the nose, and the old lady, getting her back up, went for his mug with her finger nails and everlastingly clawed him.

"Dere, pard, I guess dat'll do 'em for ter-night, but whenever yer wake up just snatch the covers off them for luck," said Shorty, leaning back and laughing heartily.

"By George! Shorty, you've made me sore in the ribs from laughing," said Shanks.

Every time during the night, that either of them awoke, the string was pulled, the clothes stripped off the snoring Quaker and his scratching wife, and the former would be heard jawing, scrambling, stumbling and praying for a judgment of heaven to come down and smite him if ever he was caught again inside of a hotel.

Shorty was up early next morning and broke the fine string off close to where it passed over the door, and the old people never noticed it when they fled from the house next morning, Nehemiah's face looking as if he'd been raking it with a curry-comb.

Of course such practical jokes always leak out, and before that night one of the evening papers had got hold of it, and came out with an account of the affair, under the heading of "How to Cure a Snorer." This proved an immense advertising card for the minstrel troupe, and during the rest of the week it was impossible to get standing room, so anxious were the boys to see Shorty.

The week drew finally to an end, and the New York Minstrels made their farewell bow to the host of friends they had made in the city by their gentlemanly manners off the stage, as much as by their inimitable performance before the footlights.

Baltimore had been visited by Shorty's advance agent, rooms secured at Barnum's Hotel, and the billboards, fences and walls covered with illuminated posters announcing the coming of the company, so that nothing was left for them to do but to get up and get.

They met accordingly the next morning at the Pennsylvania Central Railroad depot, and after a parting drink and shake of the hands with their friends who had come to see them off, they scrambled aboard of the train just as it was pulling out, and were fortunate enough to obtain seats together.

"Well, we're off again," remarked Shanks, as he folded his long legs under the seat and looked around.

"Yer bet, we're often on der move," coddled Shorty.

"Might call us train-ed minstrels," laughed Dave Reed, who did the bones business.

"Who leave many a tie behind," said Tambo, pointing out of the window to the railroad ties over which they were passing.

"We don't wear bustles if we do have ties behind," observed Shanks.

"Tickets here," bawled the conductor, coming up to the party.

"We don't want ter tick it," said Shorty, cocking his eye up comically at the gayly uniformed conductor.

"Come, you must show it here."

"Can't show dis side of Baltimore, we're billed for dat town."

"Your fare, an' less chin," said the conductor, sternly.

"We may be fair jest now, but we're der wust kind of brunettes when we gets coked up," said Shorty, and the passengers shouted with laughter.

"Have'nt you got any money?"

"Stacks of it."

"Then, if you don't pay your way I'll fire you off."

"I weigh a hundred an' thirty, an' I want ter be round when dat conflagration comes off," said Shorty.

"This train don't carry dead heads," remarked the conductor, getting angry.

"Den yer had better jump off, fur yer der worst ole lookin' corpse I've seen ter-day," replied Shorty, and the rest of the band echoed his sentiments.

"I shan't stand this."

"Den take a seat, you'll find one der oder side dere."

"I must have money."

"Den you'd better sell yerself ter some doctor ter dissect yer."

"I'll stop the train."

"I guess can I stan' dat if der train can."

"An' I'll bounce the whole crowd of you off."

"Ain't dat a kinder big contract yer goin' ter take? Better take a partner in ter help yer or der train'll be late gettin' inter Baltimore," said Shorty, so funnily that the passengers indulged in another laugh.

"Have or haven't you got any tickets?" demanded the conductor, now frantic with rage, but feeling himself helpless before the crowd.

"Course we 'ave."

"Well, why in thunder didn't you let me see them at first?"

"Cause yer was so good-lookin' we thort we'd like der pleasure of yer company," said Shorty, and as the man was particularly homely, this set everybody in the car giggling again, and the conductor thought he'd give up his chances of heaven and a month's pay to be able to safely wring that little runt's neck, but he was forced to bottle his rage and punch the tickets instead of the heads of their owners.

"Don't yer forget ter drop 'roun' again an' be sociable," said Shorty, mockingly.

"Hain't got a photograph of yourself you'd give a feller to remember you by?" inquired Shanks, sticking out one of his long legs and letting him trip over it.

"What sized watch do you carry so as we can buy you one that'll fit when we get to Baltimore?" asked Dave Reed.

"Never mind 'bout askin' us to have a smoke, we're just as much 'bliged," said Tambo.

"I'd like to give the whole of you a dose of poison," muttered the conductor, punching the last ticket and starting for the door.

"Da, da"

"Ta, ta."

"Bye, bye."

"Au revoir."

"You forgot to kiss me farewell," shouted the gang.

"Go to thunder!" yelled the conductor, rushing out and slamming the door, and he never showed his face again during their trip.

On their arrival in Baltimore they took a stage and drove to the Barnum Hotel, where splendid apartments, facing on Calvert Street, had been reserved for them, and after washing the dust of travel from themselves, they partook of a hearty meal, and started off for the Front Street Theater, where they found that their reputation had preceded them, and a good house was awaiting the curtain to ring up.

Everything passed off lovely, the songs were new and well rendered, the jokes funny enough to make a muise laugh and forget to kick, the dancing tiptop, and Shorty's famous banjo performance brought down the house and received a stunning encore.

Shorty and Shanks returned to the hotel immediately after the performance was over, well pleased with the cordial reception the troupe had met with, and after a consultation, concluded to have a smoke and a good night's rest, and defer their sight-seeing till the following day.

Now it appears that the same train that brought the New York Minstrels to Baltimore had also conveyed the Honorable William Geley, member of Congress, who had been on business in Philadelphia on a short visit to his constituency before proceeding to Washington, and he, too, had taken up his room at the Barnum Hotel, and his friends and admirers, learning of his presence in the city, had determined to give him a serenade, to which end the crack band of the place had been engaged, and great preparations made that the affair might prove worthy of the industrious and enterprising City of Baltimore.

Shorty and Shanks heard of the proposed serenade on their return to the hotel, and the former instantly thought of a racket which would throw all his past ones into the shade.

Punctual to the hour named the band drew up in front of the hotel, followed by an immense crowd of citizens, who had assembled to listen to the music and the views of the distinguished member of Congress, on the affairs of the country.

After the band had played several beautiful pieces, the window of the Hon. Mr. Geley was thrown open, and that gentleman stepped forth on the little balcony that was in front of each window; at the same moment Shorty, whose room was the next one, threw open his window, and dressed in a full, plantation darkey rig, with his face blacked, stepped forth on his little balcony and bowed to the immense crowd below.

The effect was irresistible and cheers, peals of laughter, yells, and thunders of applause followed their appearance, the band striking up "Hail to the Chief" at the same moment.

"Go inside, sir!" exclaimed the congressman, red as a boiled lobster, and fairly boiling over with passion.

"Go inside yerself, an' see how yer like it," said Shorty, still bowing to the crowd, whose cheers grew fairly deafening, when it was noised about that the celebrated Shorty, of the New York Minstrels, was before them.

"These are my constituency gathered here to welcome me amongst them," said the representative, savagely.



"For the conversion of the heathen in our midst, I smite," said the missionary, as he got a left and right hander on the fat man's eyes.

"Dese 'er my constitutionarys an' dey've come 'ere ter welcome dis hair-pin," replied Shorty.

"I command you to withdraw!"

"Yer can't command one side of dis chicken!"

"Speech! Speech!" yelled the crowd below, dancing around and waving torches.

In the meantime the members of the company having arrived at the hotel, and seeing the fun, mixed themselves through the crowd and at a signal commenced shouting:

"Shorty! Speech! Shorty! Shorty!" and the crowd immediately divided itself, one half catching up the cry and making the air ring with our little hero's name, while the others yelled for "Gelley! Gelley!"

"This is an outrage," said the Honorable William, turning purple with rage and vexation.

"Am it?" asked Shorty, rolling up the whites of his eyes and sticking his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest.

"You shall sweat for this interference."

"Tain't half warm 'nuff ter sweat dis dark."

"Gelley! Gelley! speech! speech! speech!" yelled part of the crowd.

"Shorty! Shorty! speech! speech!" bawled the others. The band struck up, every one shouted, hurrahs, yelled, waved torches, laughed and seemed fairly delirious with excitement, and the scene was one never to be forgotten.

"Fellow citizens and constituents," commenced the Hon. William Gelley, advancing to the front of the balcony and bowing, "your enthusiastic and hearty welcome has proved to me that my congressional labors have met with your sanction and endorsement, without which I would never have been satisfied. Coming before you this evening—"

"Feller cisterns an' constitushonarys of Baltimore," said Shorty, coming forward and bowing to the right and left, "Ise heah ter thank yer fur der howlin' ole 'spressions of joy at seein' me back yeah once more wid yer, and if yer'll only less gif me yer attention till I 'splain der siteration of tings round dese diggin's, I'll use my indurence with my colleague and friend, Mr. Gelley, ter gif him ter sing a comic song fur yer, but"—

The shouts and roars of laughter from the crowd which was growing larger every moment, drowned everything; in vain the member of Congress held

up his hand for silence and shrieked forth his words, the yells of the crowd overpowered them.

"I'll have satisfaction for this insult!" screamed the frantic representative, who knew the joke would be known from Maine to San Francisco by morning.

"Stuffed clubs for two, an' meet me by moonlight alone," said Shorty, pointing an imaginary pistol at him.

"Shorty forever! Hip, hip, hurrah! for the boss boy of the New York Minstrels!" yelled the crowd, and our hero stepped forward once more and kissed his hand to the excited and uproarious mass of people.

"Am I alive and in the possession of my faculties, or do I dream?"

"Give it up; ain't worth shucks at der conundrum business. Try me on der banjo if yer wish ter see me ter home," interrupted Shorty.

"I, a member of Congress, representing one of the richest and most intellectual districts in the nation; that I, whose voice has so often rung through the halls of Congress, should be bearded here by some insignificant minstrel," said the Honorable William, in a voice hoarse with passion.

"Better go inter der fish-peddlin' biz, an' den yer can let yer voice ring up der dark alleys; as fur yer bein' bearded, jest take a spin down ter der barber's down stairs, an' he'll shave it all off yer clean as a baby fur ten cents, an' las' yer better take a tumble an' wipe off yer chin, when yer get up on yer eyebrow an' call der New York Minstrel gang an' insignifercant lot of hamfatters," replied Shorty, putting his thumb to his nose, and wriggling the fingers at the honorable gentleman, who rushed into the house, slammed down the window, hastily packed a few things together, and, slipping out of a side door, made a break for the depot where, catching a train, that was leaving he was whirled off to Washington, the most angry and disgusted representative ever met.

Shorty retired to his room a few minutes afterwards and found Shanks and Dave Reed rolling on the carpet in paroxysms of laughter; but it was hours before the last of the crowd dispersed, laughing and talking over this most wonderful of all Shorty's rackets.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning found everyone in Baltimore

talking and laughing over Shorty's wonderful racket of the night previous. All the morning papers took it up and published full accounts of it, and our little hero found himself besieged, whenever he left the hotel, by a good-natured crowd, anxious to catch a glimpse of the mischievous, prank-playing little fellow.

"What d'you say if we have a toddle 'round the city?" asked Shanks, after they had breakfasted.

"Dat's my best hold; let's set fire ter a couple of cigars, an' den we'll paddle," replied Shorty, leading the way into the bar-room of the hotel.

They were lighting their Havanas at the cigar counter, when a thin, clean-shaven man, with a pencil behind his ear, and a note-book in his hand, darted across the room, and said:

"Allow me to introduce myself; name's Chinit."

"Don't chin it ter us," said Shorty.

"Represent *Baltimore American Bugle*."

"Yer blow der bugle, I 'spose."

"Member of press. Leviathan power; moves the world."

"He's trying to impress us," said Shanks, humorously.

"Den why don't it move yer if it moves der world?" inquired Shorty, so comically that several people, who had stopped to listen, commenced laughing.

"I came here to ascertain some information regarding your career, Mr. Shorty," said the member of the press, opening his note-book and wetting the point of his pencil.

"Want ter pump me, hey?"

"I want to interview you in the interests of the *Baltimore American Bugle*."

"Duz it hurt much?"

"No, no; interview you, I said."

"Taint nuthin' like tooth-pulling, is it?"

"Interviewing is talking to you."

"Buzzin' me, hey?"

"Extracting your ideas."

"Dere, yer getting round ter dat tooth-jerking business again."

"I assure you I mean to cause you no physical or mental discomfort."

"Goin' ter give me laffin' gas, mebbe," suggested

Shorty, so innocently that the bystanders roared again.

"You misunderstand me. I simply wish to obtain your life for publication."

"Obtain my life; goin' ter start a burryin' ground?"

"Goodness, no; I'm a reporter."

"One of dem fellers dat lugs trunks up stairs an' smashes boxes 'bout?"

"Not at all; that's a porter. I'm connected with a paper."

"Use a string ter connect yerself wid it, or gum stickum?"

"Will you or wll you not give me some items?" said the reporter worked up to fever heat.

"Got some fast-class peppermint drops up stairs to give yer, if dat's what yer want."

"In the first place, Mr. Shorty, the public would like to know your birth-place?"

"Would dey?"

"What shall I tell them?"

"Tell 'em yer don't know, but yer'll strike off a second edition soon as yer find out."

"Name in full is?"

"Nebber get full."

"I mean your other names besides Shorty?"

"Oh, I sawey; well, I've ebber hear any feller 'quirit' round for Zacharia, Tristram, Sylvester, Thaddeous—got that down?" asked Shorty.

"Yes."

"Rufus, Phineas, Philander, Lorenzo—got 'em down?"

"Ye-es."

"Well den comes Dionysius, Marcellus, Hannibal, Bartholomew—got 'em too?"

"Ye-e-e-s."

"Den dere's Lemuel Orlando Shorty, Esquire—got dat?"

"Thank heaven you're through. How, or where on earth did you ever get so many names?"

"Nebber got 'em at all; dem ain't my names."

"Not your names?" gasped the reporter.

"Course not, I told yer 'bout 'em, so dat if yer ever met anybody of dat name, ye'd know 't wasn't this clothes-pin," replied Shorty, quietly, and the people around leaned up against the wall and laughed, while the reporter got red up to his ears, and tore the page he had written out of his notebook.

"You're a very singular character."

"You bet. I s'pose dat's 'cause I nebber was married," answered Shorty.

"You're manager of the New York Minstrel Troupe, I understand?" questioned the reporter, returning to the charge.

"Yes, I manage ter run dat gang."

"Do you travel with them?"

"Well, I mostly trabbels wid der cars," answered Shorty, flicking the white ashes from his cigar.

"Jumping Caesar! can't you understand what I'm saying to you?" asked the reporter, excitedly.

"Nebber was acquainted with any of der Caesar famerly. How far could dat feller jump standin' on a spring board?"

"Go to blazes and find out!" exclaimed the reporter, jumping up, jamming his hat down over his eyes, and thrusting his note-book down in his pocket, as if he never meant to touch it again.

"Goin' ter print all dem statements yer extracted in der Bugle?" inquired Shorty, and the crowd roared with laughter, as the interviewer, with a scowl on his face, struck out suddenly for the door.

Then Shorty and Shanks sauntered out, but finding they were attracting too much attention by walking, they hailed a carriage and drove around the Monumental City, visiting Druid Hill Park, the City Hall, Maryland Institute, Washington and the other beautiful monuments which have given the city its name.

Full house was no name for the house that flocked to see and hear the *New York Minstrels* that every evening during their stay in the city. It was a perfect jam of laughing, good-natured, applauding people, who shouted themselves hoarse over the jokes and songs of the boys from the Empire State, but when the curtain went up, disclosing Shorty, dressed in the plantation rig he had worn the night before, and standing upon a balcony formed to represent as near as possible the one at the hotel, the audience rose and made the very rafters shake with their cheers and applause.

Shorty had prepared a little speech for the occasion, full of gags and hits, which kept all hands in paroxysms of laughter till he bowed himself off the stage after the third encore.

At the expiration of the week the troupe packed their little traps, shook hands all around and boarded the train once more for a change of cities. Washington was the next place on the programme, and as the run was only forty miles, the boys found themselves there almost before they were aware of it.

"Golly, 'ere's some 'gressional committy comin' rootin' down after dere ducats," said a darkey hackman, as he saw the party alighting from the cars.

"Shoh, nig, dey'se carpet-baggers," replied another.

"Shucks! dose fellers is after post-offices," said a third.

"Fi was runnin' a post-office I'd hire dat mouth of yers for a letter box," said Shorty.

Having secured hacks for the party, Shorty gave the order and they were driven to the Arlington Hotel, where a handsome suit of apartments had been secured for them.

"I believe I must treat myself to a scrape; my chin's gettin' rough as sand-paper," said Shanks, after they had washed and lunched.

"I reckon I'll astonish my face wid some lather an' have dat ole topknot of mine rubbed, so slide 'long, I'm wid yer," remarked Shorty.

Descending to the barber shop in the basement of the hotel, they passed through an outer room, on a table in which lay some dozen or more hats belonging to customers who were taking baths or getting shaved.

"Hold on fur a minute, an' I'll show yer a gay ole racket or I'm a cotton-headed sinner," said Shorty, glancing around to see there was nobody in the room but themselves.

"Go it, pard, I'll pipe off the doors an' give you the office if any one tumbles," replied Shanks, in a whisper.

Shorty slipped over to the mantelpiece, snatched up a bottle of shoe varnish, quickly coated around the inside of each hat, then, secreting the bottle, he followed Shanks into the barber shop and took their places with the others that were waiting for their turn.

"Next!" said one of the barbers, a few minutes after their entrance, and a short, stout man jumped out of the chair, was whisked off, went into the other room after his hat and returned a moment later with it on.

"You ought to have had your hair cut, sir; it's getting rather long," said the barber, as the other paid him.

"My hair long, nonsense," said the short, stout man, going over to a looking-glass, trying to lift his hat off and nearly lifting his scalp with it.

"Great suffering Columbus! what in thunder's got into my head now?"

"Want a shampoo, sir, 'fore you go?" inquired the boss barber, watching him with amazement.

"Want the d—! I want to get this cussed hat off if it takes every hair I've got."

"Next!" sung out another barber, and a red-headed man glided in, put on his plug hat, tripped lightly out, and on going to have a look at himself in the glass was profanely surprised and excited at not being able to budge his hat.

"Don't your hair suit you?" asked the boss barber, of the last victim.

"Suit the dickens, you idiot!" howled the brick-top man, as he tried to drag his plug off.

A bald-headed man, who had been having a bath, entered at this moment and joined the others in swearing, stamping, skipping about and trying to lift the tops of their heads off, while Shorty and Shanks hid their faces behind a couple of newspapers, and nearly shook themselves off their chairs with laughter.

Ten minutes later that shop was filled with howling, cavorting, maniacal men, who alternately tugged and tore at their hats in vain attempts to get them off, and falling, chased the frightened barbers around the shop for satisfaction.

"Oh, you lathering scoundrel, d'you s'pose I'm going to sleep in my hat for the rest of my life?" exclaimed a pugilistic victim, letting fly his right fist at a flying barber and knocking him over a chair.

"Goodness alive! see here, barber, I'm a deacon in the church and have to lead the prayer meeting to-night. You must really get this off me at once," pleaded the meek-looking old gentleman, coming forward out of a corner, where he had been praying and struggling to get himself free from his hat without unroofing his head.

"Confound your razor-sharpening picture! what in Halifax did you put on my hair?" bawled another customer, as he backed one of the barbers up into a corner and commenced pommeling him.

"Bay ram an—Oh, don't sir! don't!"

"Bay fi die-sticks, you villain!" interrupted the other, getting his fingers in the barber's shirt-band and giving it a twist.

"I—I—assure you, s—sir—y—you're c—choking m—me, s—sir," gasped the knight of the razor, his eyes popping out like lobsters, as the pugilistic and angry customer took another turn in his shirt-band.

"I'll choke you inside out if you don't get that hat off me."

Then the badly-scared barber caught the rim of the hat with both hands and gave a wrench, and

his oppressor dropped down on his knees and howled for mercy.

"You will hit me!" exclaimed the barber, hauling him around on the floor by his hat.

"Let go, you darned idiot! don't you know you're hauling my brains out?" cried his victim.

"And choke me, hey?" and the shampooer gave the hat another jerk, while its owner shrieked like a menagerie broke loose.

"Come 'long, Shanks, let's us make a break out of 'ere," said Shorty, starting quietly out of the door followed by Shanks and the yells and profanity of the struggling crowd behind them.

"Twouldn't be healthy down dere wid dose ham-fatters if dey found out who gummed dese plugs on to dem," laughed Shorty, when they had turned the corner.

"Heavens and earth! they'd murder you in seven shakes of a lamb's tail," replied Shanks. "I thought I'd have laughed my back teeth out when I saw the fellow down on his knees in the corner praying for the angels to come down and help him off with his hat."

"Den dere was another clam dat kept a-tellin' me he was goin' ter be married ter-day, an' wantin' ter know how he'd look standin' up 'fore der minister wid an ole played-out plug hat on," replied Shorty, and they both shouted with laughter at the recollection of the scene they had passed through.

"And what did you advise him to do, Shorty?"

"Oh, I 'vised 'im ter chop off his head an' leave it outside der church till he'd got spliced, an' den glue it on wid a little of der same gum squintum," chuckled Shorty, and they turned into Pennsylvania Avenue a moment later, and started off in search of another barber's shop.

That evening the *New York Minstrels* opened at Ford's Opera House to a full house. Shorty's reputation as a joker had preceded him, and the boys of Washington mustered strong to give him a welcome worthy of the Capital of the United States.

The performance was, as usual, a good one, everything worked smoothly and the audience manifested their appreciation of the company's efforts by long and frequent outbursts of applause; Shorty, as usual, carrying off the honors of the evening.

"Well, pard, good house for a first night, wasn't it?" asked Shanks, as they left the theater.

"Bully good, we can't squeal at our luck so far," replied Shorty, tipping a stout, pompous gentleman's hat off with his cane, picking it up quickly and handing it to him with:

"This is yourn, ain't it? I thought I saw yer drop somethin'."

"Of course it's mine; but who in thunder knocked it off?" replied the stout party, not knowing whether to strike or thank Shorty.

"What's the matter wid yer anyhow? den't yer want der hat?"

"Did you see who it was knocked it off me?"

"I don't care 'bout tellin' tales," replied Shorty.

"But I demand to know, and if I don't teach him to knock another gentleman's hat off, I'll eat my shirt."

"Mash 'im, wouldn't yer?"

"I say, show me the man who done it."

"I shouldn't wonder if he could get away wid yer; he's awfully and religious like, but he's quick—den a flash at der rough-an'-tumble," said Shorty.

"I'll risk it; where is he?"

"Well, I s'pose if I must tell yer I must, dat's all 'bout it. D'yer see dat feller in der white choker and de book in his hand shinnin' 'long head of us dere?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, he was actin' drefel suspishus 'bout der time yer hat cum off."

The stout gentleman waited to hear no more, but quickening his pace till he overtook the stranger, who was a city missionary returning home from a prayer meeting, he slapped him on the shoulder and remarked:

"Thought you'd get away, didn't you?"

"Get away?" asked the missionary, wonderingly.

"Smart trick that was, only it didn't work worth a clam."

"I'm afraid you have been looking upon the wine when it is red," said the man of peace.

"An' I'm afraid I'm going to bust you square in the ear in about two minuts and a half."

"And wherefore has my ear offended you?"

"Think you can knock a fellow's hat over his nose with impunity?"

"Knock your hat over your nose; why, man, I'm a missionary in the city," replied the gospel man, concluding he was conversing with a fanatic.

"Missionary's too thin. I'll make you think a tribe of cannibals had got hold of you."

"I was returning from the house of prayer, when you rudely broke in upon my meditations."

"I'll break in upon your jaw if you ever try any



"I'm gone! shot through the heart. Oh, have mercy on me, and put me out of my agony," groaned Gelley, fully convinced that he had been shot.

more such games on me, d'you hear that?" asked the stout gentleman, excitedly, and he was turning away, when Shorty and Shanks came along, and the former quickly and without being noticed, flipped his hat off again with the point of his cane.

"Oh, ho! you're at it again, are you?" exclaimed the fat man, diving into the gutter after his tile, and then rushing after the missionary, who was quietly pursuing his way in total ignorance of the whole affair, till he found himself halted by the stout gentleman, and invited to fight.

"Go thy way, man, and interrupt me not further with your boisterous and unseemly conversation," said the missionary, endeavoring to pass him.

"I'm going to interrupt you right in the nose," replied the fat man, squaring off and shaking his fists round recklessly.

"Your intellect is either deranged or you are under the excitement of liquor. In either case I desire no further conversation with you."

"An' you s'pose you can get up and skim my hat into the gutter whenever you darn please?"

"The idea is simply ridiculous and preposterous."

"It may be ridiculous for you, but I'll be fetotally hanged if 'tis for me, and I'm just going to have satisfaction out of your hide!" said the stout man, dancing around on the sidewalk in front of the missionary, and finally striking out a blow from the shoulder.

"I detest quarrels and avoid brawls; but I must convert this man of violent deeds and false accusations," said the missionary, laying his hymn-book down on one of the steps and putting up his fists in a way that showed he was posted in the manly art of self-defense.

"Take that, Smarty, and see how you like knocking off hats," said the fat man, letting fly a blow at the other's head.

"In the interests of Christianity, I strike," replied the missionary, cleverly parrying the blow and planting a stinger on his opponent's chin.

"Don't ask me to spare you after that!" and the fat man struck out madly right and left.

"For the conversion of the heathen in our midst, I smite," said the missionary, as he got a left and right hander on the fat man's eyes.

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" exclaimed the stout party, puffing like a porpoise, as he made a rush at his hard-fisted little opponent.

"In aid of the oppressed and defenseless, I let fly," remarked the missionary, stepping to one side, as the fat man came at him, and landing a left-hander behind the ear that brought him down on his knees, and gave him the impression that he had been kicked by a mule.

"Hold on! let up! I've got enough!" said the fat man, getting up and starting off in search of a drug store.

"I have labored and wrestled for the advancement of missionary work," said the missionary, picking up his hat and hymn-book and meandering slowly away.

"Shoot me, if dat ain't der gamest little preacher ever I spotted," said Shorty, who with Shanks had been amused spectators of the whole affair.

"Understood his business right up to the handle," replied Shanks, laughing.

"Put up his props like an old time buffer," continued Shorty, as they started for the hotel.

"Gemmen, sah, waitin' ter see ye, sah," said one of the colored waiters, coming over to Shorty, as soon as he entered the hotel.

"Did he give yer his name?"

"No, sah."

"Where is he?" asked our hero.

"In de deception room, sah."

"All O K, Pomp. I'll find 'im," said Shorty, ascending the stairs and entering the reception room, where he found himself face to face with the Honorable Mr. Gelley, Member of Congress.

"Hello, Beeswax, old shouter. Glad to see yer hain't forgot a feller," said Shorty, winking his eye and giving a low whistle of astonishment to Shanks.

"I have called upon you, fellow, in reference to your outrageous and unpardonable conduct toward me in Baltimore," replied the honorable member, pacing up and down the room with nervous strides.

"Oh, dat's all right, ole hop-fly, I forgive yer, an' yer needn't take such a little thing so much ter heart."

"Little thing! do you call it a little thing for me, a Member of Congress, to be held up as an object of ridicule and laughing-stock all over the country?"

"What's the use of blamin' yerself 'bout it?" asked Shorty, comically.

"Blame myself! Why, I only blame myself for not having had you hurled from that infernal balcony!" exclaimed the Member of Congress, frantically.

"Guess yer don't get 'nuff ter eat at yer hash house, or yer wouldn't come belly-achin' round 'ere wid yer back up on yer shoulders like a camel," replied Shorty, aggravatingly.

"Do you suppose, you insignificant runt, that it's nothing when I arise in my seat in the house to be asked by some member when I was going to have another serenade?"

"Yer act jest as 'if yer were troubled wid worms, an' 'if yer am, soak in dead loads of catnip tea an' sulphur, an' yer'll knock 'em higher than a kite," advised Shorty.

"I shall have recourse to the law."

"I shall have recourse ter some feller ter kick yer down stairs if yer don't swim out."

"You shall hear from me," said the honorable member, stamping towards the door.

"Don't yer forget ter put a stamp on der envelope," called out Shorty after him, but he received no reply.

CHAPTER VI.

We left our friends, Shorty and Shanks, at the Arlington House, in Washington, enjoying a hearty laugh over the reappearance, rage and threats of the Honorable Mr. Gelley.

"Dat hamfatin' spouter's mad nuff ter burst an' blow hisself all ter flinders," said Shorty, as the door slammed behind the congressional member.

"Mad's no name for it; why, I wouldn't trust him alone with a bar of soap for fear he'd cut his throat," laughed Shanks.

"Or a codfish ball ter blow his brains out wid," suggested Shorty, humorously.

"Yes, or drown himself in a glass of milk punch."

"Shucks, pard, if ever dat wind-bag committs susanside, it'll be by talkin' hisself ter death."

"Yes, or 'cause nobody'll listen ter him."

Having thrown away their cigars, Shorty and Shanks started off for bed, where they managed to enjoy a good night's sleep in spite of the thunderbolts the Honorable Mr. Gelley had threatened to launch at their heads.

They were snoozing away like humming-tops the next morning, when a loud knock at the door drove sleep from their pillows and opened their eyelids as if they had been set on springs.

"Who's dere?" exclaimed Shorty, popping up in bed.

"Only me, sah," said a voice outside of the door.

"I'm glad of dat, for I thought it was an earthquake," said Shorty.

"House hasn't been struck by lightning, has it?" inquired Shanks, sitting up on the side of the bed.

"No, sah, not dat I'm preware of."

"Hotel's not on fire?"

"No conflaggeration, sah."

"Any riot going on?"

"I didn't observe any as I prescended the stairs, sah."

"No mad dog around?"

"No, sah; no hyperphobia."

"Anybody got the smallpox?"

"No confectious diseases, sah."

"No person dead?"

"No sah, no one kerfunct."

"Anybody born?"

"I ain't shuah 'bout dat, sah."

"What was yer buttin' at der door for 't any-rate?" asked Shorty.

"Gemmen down stairs, sah, insist 'pon seein' Mister Shorty, sah."

"Did he giv' ye his pasteboard?"

"Yes, sah."

"All rite, darkness, jest hole yer breath a minute, an' I'll be wid yer," said Shorty, sliding out of bed and waddling over to the door, where the waiter handed him a card.

"Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort—Immediate," read Shorty, slowly.

"Who in thunder's Hold the Fort?"

"Some cockroach major, I s'pose," replied Shorty; then turning to the grinning darkey, he said: "Slide off on yer hip an' tell der officer I'll be wid 'im 'fore he can pick his teeth wid a straw."

Hastily dressing themselves, Shorty and Shanks descended to the reception-room, where they found a big, pot-bellied marine officer, stalking to and fro like some immense human parrot.

"Bombs and bloodshed! which of you gentlemen is named Shorty?" he demanded, on their entrance.

"Dat's der name dis huckleberry's got plinned ter him," said Shorty, glancing up at his braided and brass-bound visitor.

"Then, sir, you are the diminutive party whom I'm commissioned to wait upon."

"Bile ahead, major, an' save yer wind," said Shorty, coolly.

"I am here on behalf of my friend, the Honorable William Gelley, Member of Congress."

"Which half?"

"Shot and shell, sir! don't you attempt any levity with me."

"Guess yer ain't anybody in partickular, are yer," asked Shorty.

"Grape and canister! do you call Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort, of the Marine Corps, nobody?"

"Is yer in der hoss marines?"

"Sir!"

"No relation ter Captin Jinks, are yer?"

"Guns and glory! You shall repent of that remark, sir."

"Been swallowing an arsenal, ain't yer?" asked Shanks.

"Banjo and sheepskin! what yer tryin' ter get through yerself, anyhow?" inquired Shorty.

"Satisfaction, sir; satisfaction for the insults you have heaped upon my friend Gelley's good name and reputation. I am here to deliver his challenge," exclaimed the major, cutting the air with his cane as if it was a saber.

"P-h-e-w!" whistled Shanks.

"Wants ter fight a duel?" asked Shorty.

"Precisely."

"Cut an' shoot, hey?" said Shanks.

"Carve an' slice?" inquired Shorty.

"He demands a meeting, sir," said the major.

"He's my meat," replied Shorty.

"Bullets and bayonets! this is an affair of honor, and admits of no frivolous language," continued the major, excitedly.

"Den old Frivylus won't be admitted ter der show."

"Cannons and calissons! do you mean to trifle with me, sir?"

"Yer don't want ter fight wid cannons, do yer?"

"The choice of weapons lies with you."

"How would stuffed clubs work?" inquired Shorty.

"This equivocation will not answer."

"Is Quiverkashua goin' ter be one of der pall-bearers?"

"No apology will be accepted," said the major, pompously.

"I never drink 'fore hash, so yer must 'scuse me treatin'," said Shorty.

"Will you name your second?"

"Me name 'im! why he's got a name already."

"Turrets and torpedoes, sir! let me have it, then."

"He's usin' it hisself."

"Have you no one to act for you in this affair?"

"You bet. I've got a whole troupe that act for me every night; want me ter dead-head yer in?"

"Cavalry and carbines, sir! you must have a second."

"What's der hurry; let's take a minit."

"Whom do you refer me to?"

"To der boss of der loonatic 'sylum."

"Bloodshed and battering rams, sir! My friend will brand you as a coward if you refuse to fight."

"I guess yer mean he'll brandy hisself," coddled Shorty.

"You don't know, sir, what a powder magazine you're standing over when you trifle and jest with Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort."

"All rite, Cockroach. Keep yer shirt on an' don't go ter 'splodin' an' blowin' yer remains round on dis carpet an' wall paper."

"Gods of war, sir! I shall hold you accountable for that," exclaimed the major, puffing himself up till he looked like some immense military bull-frog.

"Why don't yer talk 'bout der gin slingers an' folks yer better 'quainted with dan der gods?" asked Shorty, tauntingly.

After he had coddled the major till he had him as mad as a hive of hornets stirred up with a stick, Shorty suddenly changed his manner, and said, sharply:

"Yer friend Gelley is howlin' for saterfacshun, is he?"

"He demands it."

"Wants ter fight a duel?"

"Blood must flow to wipe out the insult he has received."

"Who is his second?"

"I, Major Rochefoucauld Holdfort, will act."

"When will yer man be ready ter be plugged?"

"This evening."

"Where?"

"Just outside of Georgetown."

"I have der choice of weapons?"

"You have."

"Den I'll select muzzle-loadin' smooth-bore rifles, distance fifty yards apart. Each of our guns ter be loaded an' handed ter us by der other man's second," said Shorty, quickly.

"Fifty yards with rifles! Why, that is certain death!" exclaimed the major.

"Have yer man on hand at 5 P. M., sharp. My friend Shanks here will act for me; an' yer bet, Cockroach, dat I'll give dat blood an' gore chum of yers all der shoot he wants ter put in his pipe," replied Shorty, firmly, and the major, finding himself unable to make other arrangements, was forced to finally agree to the terms offered, and take his departure.

"Are you really in earnest, little one, about popping that old congressional wind bag?" asked Shanks, as they passed into the breakfast-room and took their seats at a small table.

"Dat's 'bout der size of it, pard," said Shorty.

"And with rifles at fifty yards?"

"You bet."

"Loaded?"

"Ye-up, one of dem loaded chock up ter der nozzle; do yer tumble?"

"Loaded to the muzzle?"

"Wid powder; ain't yer fly?"

"Kenol! I savez. The sea-sojer chap with the cockroach name's to load your gun, an' I'm to load old Stick-in-the-mud's."

"An' I wan't yer ter load it chock full of powder, so dat it'll kick wuss dan a government mule."

Shanks promised, and Shorty and he pitched into their breakfast in a manner that looked as if one of them at least was determined to be slaughtered with a full stomach.

After a hearty feed had been disposed of, they lit a couple of A. No. 1 cigars, and started out in search of a hack; having secured one they visited the Capitol, Presidential Mansion, Treasury, War

and Navy Departments, Patent and General Post Office, and Smithsonian Institute.

On their way to the hotel, they stopped at a gunsmith's, and, by leaving a deposit to cover the value, obtained a couple of old Harper's Ferry muskets.

Leaving the Arlington Hotel about four in the afternoon, Shorty and Shanks hailed a calse hack, and, stowing their rifles in it, ordered the driver to proceed to Georgetown.

"I guess I'll ram a few charges down this shootin'-iron while I've got a chance," remarked Shanks, after they had started.

"Don't yer spare der powder," said Shorty.

"I won't be stingy," laughed Shanks, as he poured about a quarter of a pound of powder into one of the rifles and rammed it home with a wad.

On reaching the spot agreed upon, they dismissed the hackman, telling him to wait at the Georgetown House till their return. A few minutes after their arrival on the ground another carriage drove up, and the Honorable William Gelley and his friend, Major Holdfort alighted.

"Ah, the viper is here!" exclaimed Gelley, folding a cloak around his form and leaning up against his second, with trembling knees that gave the lie to his voice.

"Don't shoot him through the heart first shot; pop him in the lung and let him bleed to death," said Shanks, in a voice which they could hear plainly.

"Oh, Lord, major, do you hear that?" muttered Gelley, turning the color of a whitewashed wall, and moving over the ground as if his feet were lead.

"I tell yer I'm right on der shoot ter-day; reckon I'll bust him fair twixt der eyes; dey allus croak so quick dat it saves a heap of trouble," said Shorty, audibly.

"T-t-w-i-x-t the eyes," he says," moaned Gelley, shuddering as his eyes fell on the rifles.

"Marines and muskets, sir! be firm and cool," said the major.

"I'll be cool enough after the first shot. You won't forget the messages I left you," whispered the Honorable William.

"Cartridges and cheese knives! you can rely on me."

"Now, then, let's pace off the ground and toss for places," said Shanks, and he was stepping off the ground when Gelley said:

"Oh, major, do, for heaven's and my sake, get him to step a little longer."

"This is just about the time of day you shot that fellow through the brain in New York, ain't it?" asked Shanks, winking at Shorty.

"A little later dan dis. Didn't he flop over, though?"

"It's all up. He shot a fellow in New York and flopped him over. "Oh, Lord! I'll be flopped over too!"

"Now we'll load the muskets," said Shanks, and he handed the empty one to the major, who with trembling fingers loaded one of them, putting in the ball first and the powder afterwards in his excitement.

When they had tossed for choice of place, which Shanks managed, by the aid of a double-headed penny, to win, they placed their men, and Shanks presented Gelley with his musket, while the major did the same office by Shorty.

There was another tossing of coin in the air, and then Shanks remarked:

"Gentlemen, it has fallen to me to give the word. At the word one!"

"Oh, major, tell him I'll accept of an apology of any kind."

"Stocks and war-hats! brace up sir."

"You will raise your muskets to your shoulders!"

"I want to go home for a minute. There's a clause I forgot to put in my will," said Gelley, shaking as if he had the ague.

"Oh, won't I plug a hole through him, though," said Shorty.

"At the word two," continued Shanks, "you will!"

"I'll apologize; I'll get down on my knees and beg everybody's pardon; only I don't and can't leave my constituency that elected me," groaned Gelley, shakingly.

"Tampions and traitors! be a man, sir," exclaimed his second.

"As I was saying, at the word 'two' you will cock your pieces and take aim," explained Shanks.

"How're yer, Creedmoor?" laughed Shorty.

"Can't this thing be stopped somehow before I'm murdered?" demanded Gelley, sitting down on a stone and looking faintly around him.

"Battalions and bulls-eyes! Keep a stiff back-bone, sir," advised the major.



The men grabbed at the hats, lifting them off their owner's heads, and a second later the nuts poured down and rattled over the floor.

"Oh, it's easy enough for you that ain't going to be shot through the heart and brain and lungs, to say keep a stiff backbone; I'll be stiff enough all over pretty soon to suit you," gasped Gelley.

"To continue, at the word three"—

"Dat's der one I wan't," said Shorty.

"That's the funeral preparation," sighed Gelley.

"You will both fire at once"—

"Give me as fine a funeral as you can; don't spare expense. Oh, Lord, what did I ever let myself get into such a scrape as this for?" sobbed the congressman.

"Regiments and revolvers! Keep a stiff upper lip."

"Go on wid der show. I want ter get back, after polishing dis fellow off, in time for my show."

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" exclaimed Shanks.

"Ready!" said Shorty.

"Give me time to say a little prayer."

"Knapsacks and bayonet-scarbards! Keep cool and aim at his heart."

"One!"

"Oh, Lordy, Lordy!" gasped the Honorable William, bringing his musket slowly up.

"Two!"

"Hold on! hold on! I'll pay any damages you want, only don't shoot!" bawled Gelley.

They gave him a drink of brandy, braced him up, and he said a short prayer, shut both eyes, and pointing his musket at the blue sky above him, awaited the fatal number.

"Three!"

There was a report as if a powder magazine had exploded, and the Honorable William was observed to try and kick a hole in the sky, and failing, to subside in a shrieking, bruised, frightened, sore and torn heap of humanity, while the major, whom the musket had struck on the shins, was dancing around swearing military oaths like a patent machine.

"I'm gone! shot through the heart. Oh, have mercy on me, and put me out of my agony," groaned Gelley, writhing on the ground, fully convinced that he had been shot.

"By the battering rams of the ancients, I believe my leg's broke!" howled the major.

"Want any more satisfaction?" inquired Shorty, laughing himself nearly inside out.

"Don't talk to a dying man," said Gelley, faintly.

Shorty and Shanks started back to Georgetown, laughing heartily over their racket, and leaving the war-like marine officer and his weak-kneed principal to recover at their leisure. On their arrival at the Georgetown House they found the hack waiting for them, and entering it were driven speedily back to the city.

"What d'yer say, if we scoop in der president's reception ter-night?" asked Shorty, as they were eating their supper and listening to the newsboys shouting:

"Hextra edition! *Washington Chronicle*, full 'count of der great duel 'tween a Member of Congress an' Shorty!"

"Don't news travel fast?" asked Shanks.

"You bet; what dem reporters don't know ain't worth knowin'."

"How are we going to fix about the show?"

"Oh, dat's all fixed. I put a song an' dance down in place of my act," said Shorty.

After supper they adjourned to their rooms, made a stunning toilet, and having spruced themselves up, called a carriage and ordered the driver to take them to the White House.

On their arrival at the presidential mansion they left their carriage, and following a number who were passing in, soon found themselves in the "blue-room," where the president stood receiving.

"What name did you say?" inquired the President, in Shorty being presented.

"Shorty," said his excellency's son, who was doing the honors.

"Ah, well the people are not apt to be short of fun when you are around, from what I've heard," said the President, shaking our hero's hand warmly.

"I ain't much company for a funeral gang, dat's a fact," replied Shorty.

"Make a better stump speaker to a Baltimore audience, hey? When I run for my second term I must secure you to stump for me," observed his excellency, laughing heartily.

"Dat's a bargain, if der oder side don't want me ter run for President 'gainst yer; 'cause if they did I couldn't toot yer horn worth a clam," said Shorty.

Here his son leaned over and whispered a moment with his father, and the President burst out into a hearty laugh, and still holding fast to our hero's hand, said:

"What's this terrible bloodthirsty story I hear about your slaughtering our honorable legislators and brave marine officer defenders?"

"Guess dat snoozer was at der wrong end of der gun ter be slaughtered."

"Don't you know you've broken the laws of the land in fighting a duel?" asked the President, quizzically.

"As der wasn't nuthin' but powder in der guns, I thort I'd only cracked der laws."

"You're a comical character, I can see that, but I fear I'll have to put you under bonds and promises not to exterminate any more of our congressmen."

"Dere's heaps of people out 'er which you kin make more of 'em; but for der sake of der constitutionary, I promise," said Shorty.

"Ha, hal very good; call on me whenever you are in Washington. Always glad to meet you. Wish I had you in the cabinet. We would have some fun once in a while," observed the President.

"Cabinet? I ain't much on ter furniture biz, so I guess I'll stick ter der banjo for a while," answered Shorty, and the President burst out laughing, and shaking Shorty once more heartily by the hands let him pass on.

After passing through and admiring the blue, red and east rooms, Shorty and Shanks went back to the hotel, well pleased with their reception at the White House.

The next morning all the papers came out with displayed headings and full accounts of the great duel and all Washington shook its sides during the day with laughter over it, and at night the street leading to Ford's Opera House, where the New York Minstrels were performing, was blocked by an impatient, eager throng, anxious to catch a glimpse of the famous Shorty.

After a week's performance in the "City of Magnificent Distances," to houses such as never before had greeted a minstrel troupe, Shorty gave the word to pack up and light out, and the next morning found the company speeding on their way towards Pittsburg.

The trip between the places proved at an eventful one; the boys amused themselves by singing, joking and cooing each other, and everybody that chose to take a hand, or rather, tongue, in.

Arriving in Pittsburg, they proceeded to the Monongahela House, where a magnificent suite of apartments had been set aside for their coming.

After indulging in a good wash, and lightening themselves of the dust from their journey in the cars, Shorty and Shanks strolled down to the Pittsburgh Opera House, where they had arranged to open, and took a squint over the building, returning to the hotel in time for a good square meal.

CHAPTER VII.

We left our friends, Shorty and Shanks, taking a look at the Opera House, Pittsburgh, where the company were billed to open that evening. After seeing that all the necessary arrangements for the performance had been made, they strolled back to the Monongahela House, where they found the rest of the troupe sitting in the smoking-room, chatting and telling comical stories of their minstrel careers.

"Guess who's in the city, boss?" said Dave Reed, on their entering the room and joining them.

"Oh, dere's lots of folks. I saw seven men, six women, three boys, a fat peeler, a bob-tailed dorg, a lame mule, a yaller street-car, an' a striped barber pole myself," answered Shorty, jestingly.

"Pshaw! I ain't joking. It's some persons that you'll be astonished to learn are here," said Dave.

"Tain't my rich parients come ter look for dere long-lost son, Shorty, wid der strawberry shortcake mark on his left heel? Speak, vilyun! an' lemme go haul off my socks and trim my toenails fore 'tis ter late!" exclaimed Shorty, tragically, and everyone present burst out laughing as he stamped across the floor and struck an imploring attitude before Dave Reed.

"You're sure it wasn't the Grand Duke Alexis inquiring for me," said Shanks.

"No, nor a cop either inquirin' for you," laughed Dave.

"Did she have pink eyes an' a number two bustle?" asked one of the others.

"What sized mouth did she wear?" asked another.

"It wasn't a she, an' as for mouths there ain't nothin' outside of a laughin' alligator can touch you on the mouth question," retorted Dave.

"It wasn't any lovely blue-eyed angel of a child dat wanted ter claim me for it's daddy, 'count of der strikin' likeness? 'cause I ain't ter home ter such sakes," inquired Shorty.

"No."

"Or Bonaparte at the battle of Bunker Hill?" suggested one of the boys.

"Your 'bout as near it as Bonapart was."

"Is it for us all to guess at?" asked another.

"Yes."

"Is ther answer, I can't tell a whopper. I cut it wid my little pane of blue glass?" asked Shorty.

"I've got it! The answer's 'cause he can't climb a tree," said Shanks.

"Sugar, you blekes wouldn't tumble to it in seventeen years of Sundays, so I may as well tell you."

"Generous, noble-hearted comrade," said the song and dance man.

"We're all ears, like a Chicago mule," said Shanks.

"Bounce it out of yer 'fore it sticks in yer craw," chimed in Shorty.

"Bring it out easy now."

"Break the news gently."

"Oh, give us a breeze," said Dave. "Well, what d'you say to your old gang being here, stopping at the Merchant's Hotel an' billed to play to-morrow night at Canterbury Hall?"

"Dey here! Who's runnin' der gang?" asked Shorty.

"Polly."

"Who'd yer see?"

"Charley Pettingill."

"And they're going to run against us?" asked Shanks.

"That's what's the matter, Pettingill said. Polly told dere boys he was going to take the starch out of this crowd."

"Big job they've contracted for," remarked Shanks.

"All der starch dem hamfatters can squeeze out of dis crowd won't stiffen dere eyelashes," said Shorty, contemptuously.

"It'll be a case of 'Polly wants a (joke) cracker,' to help him get off something funny," said the song and dance man.

"Or, 'Polly won't yer cry me oh,'" suggested Dave Reed.

"Snide old place they're opening in, if they're going to go into the starchin' business," said Tambo.

"Who's Polly got wid him in der gang?" asked Shorty.

"Same old lot of heelers you used to travel with, with one or two execeptions."

"Chance if dey don't put up some racket on us at der show ter-night; dem blokes hates me like stewed pizen, an' I'll try an' get squar wid me fust chance dey gets. So yer fellers want ter keep yer starboard eyes peeled ter-night for 'em; do yer pootiest and don't lose yer tempers if they do try it," explained Shorty.

"Hold mine with both hands," said one of the boys.

"I guess they'll find they ain't got hold of no muffin nine when they tackle and try to scoop in the New York Minstrels," observed another.

"Dey're foolin' with a hornet's nest when der stinger's famerly's all ter home."

"Yes, or caressing a mule's hind leg—a rather ticklish and short-lived business," said Shanks.

"All the racket them 'fly-by-nights' can start won't make me look pale when I get under my burnt cork," said Tambo.

"Dat's yer war-paint, ain't it?" asked Shorty, laughing.

"Yes; and when I'm on the war-path I can 'bring down the house' and scalp the gal-ery."

"En-cores you can."

"All rite, bullies; only don't let 'em snoozers put yer out, or yer'll never hear der las' of it."

"We won't, boss," answered the troupe; and, after absorbing something soothing at the bar, Shorty went up to his room accompanied by Shanks, feeling confident that any racket or job that Polly's company could put up, would miss fire and recoil upon their own heads, now that his boys were on their guard.

Shorty's duel in Washington had been copied in full by the Pittsburgh papers, and the Smoky City boys turned out in good old-fashioned style to catch a glimpse of the smallest, and, at the same time, greatest practical joker in the United States.

"A full house, boys," said Shanks, peeping through the hole in the curtain before it was rung up.

"Lem me take a squint 'round till I see 'f I can spot any of dem flip-flappers," said Shorty, scrambling on the chair, and looking searchingly around the well-filled house. "Yes, dey're here, an' he's got 'em strung all 'round der house. I dropped on ter one in der parquet, tumbled ter two in der gallery, dere's one—two—three in der orchestra chairs, an' der rest scattered 'round. Look out for danger when der bell rings, boys."

The curtain rang up, and the New York Minstrels made their evening bow to a Pittsburgh audience amidst considerable clapping of hands.

The first part passed off quietly and swimmingly, the boys letting themselves loose, as they felt they were acting before a rival company, who would be only too happy to grab at the smallest slip up. The songs and jokes were new, most of them having been composed for the company, and they were heartily applauded, the curtain finally dropping on the first part without any demonstrations from the opposition troupe.

"I don't trust dem duffers funder den I can chuck a bull by der tail. Shouldn't wonder, Dave, if dey'd give yer a breeze when yer show up," remarked Shorty to Dave Reed, who was standing in the wings ready dressed for his song and dance act, which came next on the programme.

"I'll risk der blowin' dis cherub off his number 'leven feet," laughed Dave, tripping upon the stage.

He had scarcely made his salaam before a loud "M-i-o-u-w!" rang out from the gallery, proving the correctness of Shorty's prophecy.

Dave kept right on with his song without even glancing in the direction the interruption came from.

"M-i-o-u-w! M-i-o-u-w!" succeeded a voice in another part of the house, and the audience craned their necks and tried in vain to catch a glimpse of the interrupter.

Dave kept steadily on with his act, paying no attention to the cat-calls, hisses, or attempts made to put him out, and wound up amidst a tumult of cheers, applause and hisses.

"Hol' on, boys, till I giv' dem cat-howlin' plums out dere a chance ter get in dere chin music on dis chicken," said Shorty, darting into the dressing-room and emerging a few moments later in his old plantation rig, with his famous banjo, which had done so much to make him a reputation, slung over his shoulder.

His appearance, as usual, was the signal for three hearty rounds of applause, which Shorty acknowledged by ducking his head, and then, picking up his banjo, he was thrumming it preparatory to singing, when from twenty different parts of the house rang out:

"M-e-o-w!"

"Bow-wow-wow!"

"Baa-baa-baa-a!"

"Cluck-cluck-cluck!"

"Cock-a-doodle-deo!"

"Hiss-s-s-s-s!"

"Wite fokes, lemme interjuce ter yer notis der poultry yard, run by a polly parrot, an' wid more geese an' sheep in der menagerie dan dere is min streis," said Shorty, climbing up on a chair and making himself heard above the tumult.

"Three cheers and a tiger for Shorty and his boss troupe!" proposed some one in the audience, and they were given with a will that showed the sympathy of the house was with him.

"Once more der procession will move," said Shorty. Seating himself and picking his banjo he sang:

"Now, wite fokes, all dis am a pity,
An' what I'se gwine ter say is so;
We boys come from New York city
An' don't take a back seat for der odder show."

The audience, knowing by the posters on the fences that a rival company were in town, saw the point at once, and treated it with hearty applause.

"Shorty, where's your monkey?" yelled one, as he was about rattling off a second verse.

"Oh Polly's got a monkey dat he used ter pay a salary, I guess he mus' hav' skipped 'im an' got up in der gallery."

If any yer boys 'll catch 'im an' cram 'im in a straight-jacket.
Der show it'll go on 'an' dat'll end his racket."

sang Shorty, composing it as he went along, and bringing down the house by so doing.

"Hiss-s-s-s-s-s!" hissed out from a dozen different places.

"New an' 'riginal interruption by der trained minstrel geese, who, like der jackass in der lion's skin, nebbor open dere pertater traps but dey put dere feet in 'em," observed Shorty.

"Fire 'em out," said one of the audience.

"I cum ter see dis yere show, an' I'll mash der next snoozer dat tries ter stop der masheen runnin'," said a big, six-foot sport, jumping up in his seat and glaring around.

"Let's bounce 'em," suggested another.

"If they don't want to see the show, let 'em climb."

"Bust der fust clam in der bugle that tries any more snide games on der New Yorkers," said a deep voice in the gallery.

"Bust it is," echoed a dozen others around him who had come to enjoy the performance, and did not intend to have it spoiled by any crowd that might have roped themselves in for that purpose.

"Go on, little one; we'll see yer thro', an' if dem hamfatters want ter live long 'nuff ter show in dis town, dey'd better git up and glue dere mouths," said the big sport, rolling up his sleeves and loosening his shirt collar significantly.

"Der circus will now proceed," said Shorty, and he dashed into a song, composing as he went along, in which he managed to bring in all the rival troupe, with their especial weaknesses, in a manner so comical that it took like the small-pox, and he received an encore that made the windows rattle and put the fear of annihilation into the hearts of the gang.

The rest of the performance passed off as smoothly as a skating pond; the boys braced themselves to do their prettiest and succeeded, receiving rounds of well-merited applause as their reward, and by the time the curtain dropped on the last act had won a place in the hearts of the boys of Pittsburgh never before held by any minstrel troupe.

"Well, Shorty, them fellers got kicked by their own gun, didn't they?" asked Shanks, as they were walking back to the hotel that evening after the show was over.

"Dem hamfatters never could put up a racket worth shucks; dey thort dey had a soft snap when dey tackled us ter-nite, but dey let both feet slip when dey calkerlated der New York gang were golu' ter weaken," said Shorty.

"That was some of Polly's work. I s'pose he's got his back up over his ears 'cause you've got a live troupe of your own and he can't boss you around."

"He'll be glad 'nuff ter get his back down again 'fore I get thro' wid 'im and his gang of hamfatters."

"Going to put up a racket on him in return?"

"You bet."

"Count me in."

"O K pard. Mums der word tho' till I get der racket cooked."

"I won't squeal."

Reaching the Monongahela Hotel, they lit a couple of cigars and entering the billiard-room amused themselves knocking the balls around, Shorty and Shanks playing partners against Dave Reed and Tambo and managing to stick them for the drinks, segars and games by their superior play.

SHORTY IN LUCK.



Dozens of the angry insects lit upon the different members of the company, who howled, fought, screamed and darted off the stage.

then partaking of a night-cap at the bar they mosied off to bed and were soon in the arms of the sleepy god Morpheus.

The next morning they sent around to a livery stable, engaged a hack and spent the largest part of the day driving around Pittsburg and Alleghany Cities, visiting the immense manufactories of iron, glass, steel, and copper, and watching the thousands of workmen flitting around through the glare of the fiery furnaces like so many modern editions of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

"A feller dat lived two days in dis smoky place wouldn't have ter use any burnt cork on his mug when he went 'fore der footlights," observed Shorty, looking at his shirt bosom and collar, which had been white and clean in the morning, and now presented a nigrour, sooty appearance.

"There ought to be about seven more rivers and forty washwomen to the man to keep a feller white," replied Shanks.

"It may be a red-hot old town, but it's mos' too much like squatin' up a smoky chimney ter suit dis canary," remarked Shorty, gazing around at the heavy pall of smoke which hung over the city, and through which the church spires stuck out like exclamation marks.

"Then again there appears to be no scarcity of bridges connecting it with Alleghany, as this is the seventh we've crossed to my certain knowledge."

"Guess dey wanted ter make an a bridged edition of a city out of it," suggested Shorty, wittily.

Returning to the hotel they disrobed and amused themselves for a half an hour scrubbing the soot and dirt off their faces.

The rival troupe opened to a fair house the first evening; but as their acts and songs were all old and stale the attendance dropped off nightly, and as they were billed for a two-week engagement, it looked as if the last of it would find them playing to empty benches.

Day after day passed without Shorty making any further allusion to the racket he proposed putting up on them, and Shanks was wondering if he had given up the idea, when Saturday morning, as they sat down to the breakfast-table, Shorty suddenly remarked:

"Dem hamfatters am goin' ter hav' a matinee dis afternoon, ain' dey?"

"Yes."

"Den we'll pay dem a visit."

"You and I?"

"Tell der whole gang dat I'll 'spect 'em ter be ready ter 'tend der matinee dis afternoon, an' dat I want every one of dem ter rig hisself up in a high plug hat, an' come up ter my room an' we'll all waltz down dere together," said Shorty, and he sent out and secured reserved seats, and ordered a bushel of hickory nuts sent to his room.

Punctual to time the boys all put in an appearance at Shorty's room, each one sporting a plug hat.

"Now, fellers, dem snoozers 're so fond of starting a racket on us der oder night an' I want ter see how dey like one in re turn," said Shorty.

"That's what's the matter."

"Let's get square; den dey won't hav' der laugh on us."

"Bully for you, Shorty. Whoop 'em up a dish," said Dave Reed.

"I've got reserved seats here for der whole crowd of us; an' in der fust place I want yer all ter take off yer plugs and fill dem up wid dem hickory nuts, an' den stick 'em on yer heads 'gain," said Shorty. The men laughingly complied, and half a peck or so of nuts was loaded into each man's hat.

"Der seats is scattered here an' dere thro' der house, an' I want yer fellers ter go in quietly, plank yerselves in yer seats, an' keep yer hats on; don't take 'em off, no matter what dey say," explained Shorty, and the boys, smelling the rat he had caged, promised to help him all in their power to get square with their rivals, and, after a few more directions, they started off for Canterbury Hall.

On entering they found the house about two-thirds full and the performance about to commence, and making their way to their seats in different parts of the building, they quietly seated themselves with their hats on.

Polly, who had been looking out from one side of the curtain, was at first surprised when he saw such a respectable, gentlemanly party enter in a body, but his surprise turned to consternation and rage when he saw, by the aid of an opera-glass, who they were.

"Ten thousand devils! Here's Shorty an' his whole infernal gang, an' I'll be everlastingly hanged if I don't expect he'll pull the hall down about our ears with some of his darned rackets!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

"Why don't they take off their hats?" asked Charley Pettingill.

"Go around and tell the ushers to make every mother's son of them take off their hats!" he exclaimed to a call boy, who flew off to do his errand.

The next minute the curtain went up and the company made their bow and squatted.

"Remove those hats!" said Polly, advancing to the footlights, and shaking his finger threateningly at Shorty.

"I allus wear my plug in dis kind of a snide show, so I won't have any snoozers freeze ter it," replied our hero, coolly.

"Take off them hats!"

"As yer previously remarked."

"I command you to remove them!"

"Command yer own hamfatters, fer yer can't command one toenail of der New Yorkers."

"I'll have you turned into the street!"

"Wake me up when der operation comes off."

"Ushers!" shouted Polly, purple in the face, to his assistants who were scampering around the building like long-legged grasshoppers and ranging themselves alongside of the hatted gentlemen.

"Yes, sir! yes, sir!" they answered.

"See that those fellows remove their hats!" commanded Polly, while the audience leaned back and watched the proceedings, feeling certain there was some fun in it as long as Shorty had a finger in the pie.

"Plaze, sur, take off yer hat?" said a brawny, big fellow placing himself alongside of Shorty.

"Dat's 'zactly what dis clothes-pin don't mean ter do."

"Yez won't? Begorra I'll make yez?"

"I don't mean ter get my head cold," said Shorty, glancing up comically at the giant standing over him.

"Knock them off if they don't comply," commanded Polly, nearly frothing at the mouth.

"Will yez be afther takin' it off?" demanded the man.

"Nixy off."

"Jerk those hats off, or I'll discharge every one of you!" ordered Polly, and the men, obedient to his command, grabbed at the objectionable plug hats, lifting them clear of their owners' heads, and a second later there was a racket that shook the windows as the nuts poured down and rattled over the floor, while the audience went off in perfect shrieks of laughter at the cunning way Shorty had returned the racket and got square with his rivals; but the most astonished and comical-looking persons were Polly and his assistants, the latter, having dropped the hats, stood gazing, open-mouthed, at

them, as if they were bewitched, while Polly stormed up and down the stage, and tried to make himself heard above the shouts of laughter.

As soon as the cheers and applause had somewhat subsided, Shorty and his party left the house quietly, and allowed Polly's show to proceed; but the backbone had been taken out of the performers by the sell that had been played upon them, and the acting was weak as skimmed milk.

Two days after the above racket, the New York Minstrels closed one of the most successful engagements ever played in Pittsburgh, and got ready to leave, amidst the regrets of the play-going public to whom they had attached themselves by their good acting and behavior.

Packing up their traps, they took a farewell smile with their many admirers and friends, and bounding the Pennsylvania Railroad, once more were soon being whirled away to Cincinnati, which was the next show town on their route.

The company had a quiet and uneventful trip between the two cities, passing the early part of the evening in singing and joking, and seeking the sleeping-car to rest themselves when they got tired.

It was about two P. M. of a Tuesday afternoon, when they arrived at Cincinnati, and found a stage waiting at the depot ready to convey them to the Burnet House, where the advance agent had secured rooms for them.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE left Shorty, Shanks and their boss minstrel troupe on their arrival at the Burnet House, in Cincinnati, last week.

It did not take that crowd long to make themselves at home, no matter where they were, and five minutes after their arrival in the building, they had registered their names, shook hands with the clerk, interviewed the proprietor, inspected their apartments, smiled with the barkeeper, winked at the pretty chambermaids, found out all the fresh gossip floating around, tossed dice for the cigars, and didn't seem half busy at what.

"Oh I've come back to *Cin* once more," sang Dave Reed, planting himself in a chair by the window facing on Vine Street.

"Course everybody sins twice in *Cin-cin-nati*," said Tambo, foolishly.

"Twice twenty won't cover your list, Tambo," said Shanks.

"It is a base alligator to destroy the prospects of a rising celebrity in the profession," he replied, standing up on his chair.

Shorty touched him under the coat-tail with a pin point, and he sprang wildly over the back of the seat, and clapped his hands behind in so comical and suggestive a manner that every one present roared with laughter while poor Tambo looked quite undecided whether he'd join them or not.

This trifling thing seemed to give Shorty an idea for a racket, so beckoning Shanks to him they went out and found their way to one of the largest toy stores in the city, where the former purchased two of those immense French toy spiders which are affixed to an invisible hair, and they returned to the hotel.

On their way back Shorty explained to Shanks how the racket was to be worked, and told him to post some of the cutest of the troupe while he looked up a party to play it on.

The moment he entered the smoking-room Shorty dropped to a couple of stout, hearty, well-to-do farmers, who had come into the city in reference to some pork contract. They were sitting over by the window with their chairs tipped back, smoking long pipes and calculating on the chances of a rise in pigs, when Shorty, reaching over with his cane-tip, to which he had fastened a pin, jabbed him suddenly behind, then passed quietly on in his walk.

"Everlasting corncocks!" yelled the man who had been stuck, springing wildly from his chair and glancing around.

"What's der matter wid yer now? got der cramps?" asked Shorty, stopping in his walk, and addressing the excited farmer, who was stamping on the floor and feeling around under his coat-tails.

"Cramps be darned! Somebody lanced me right here!" exclaimed the farmer, lifting his coat-tail and pointing to the spot, amidst the roars of laughter of everybody present.

"Lanced yer?" Oh, go bathe yer head," advised Shorty.

"Sit down, neighbor; do please sit down; you shouldn't let little things like that excite you," said his friend, who had been watching him with amazement.

"Excite fiddlesticks! I guess it'd excite you to have one of them same little things stuck into you."

"I bet it was a tarantula bit yer," suggested Shorty.

"Who bit me?"

"A tarantula."

"Well, if Tearin' Tuler, or whatever you call him wants to do any more bitin', I want him to practice on someone else 'cept me," said the farmer resuming his chair, and a few minutes later they were getting back to the hog-raising topic again, when Shorty walked by leaning on Shanks' arm.

It took some time to quiet the old fellows down; but at last, seeing them interested in their subject, Shorty and Shanks strolled carelessly up, and as they came behind the farmers the former suddenly whipped out one of his immense toy spiders he had purchased, and which he had fastened to the end of his cane, and holding it over their heads let it dangle for a second in their faces, then quickly whipped it out of sight. Shanks in the meantime had treated the other farmer to a jab behind with the pin.

"Suffering hayrakes! what in thunder was that?" exclaimed farmer number two, springing out of his chair and dancing around the floor.

"Lord knows! Don't ask me."

"Great gallinippers! why he scooped a mouthful out of my thigh with teeth that seemed to be six inches long, and sharp as pincers."

"Tarantula," said Shorty, simply.

"Taran the devil! Why, one of those darned things would eat a man up."

"They are kind of thick to-night. I've noticed several of them moving around on the ceilings; but they'll all get quieted down after they've had a feed," chimed in Shanks.

"I'll be hanged if they're going to get any feed off me. I came down here to sell hogs, not to be eaten up by spiders as big as cheese boxes."

Just then Shorty, who was standing directly behind him, let the squirming, wriggling, clawing thing down in front of his face, so that the claws of it tickled his nose.

"Hello! Stop him! Here he is again! Shoot him, somebody!" exclaimed the old farmer, pulling off his hat and heaving it at the spider, which Shorty immediately jerked out of sight, while the lookers-on laughed till they were sore at the fun.

"Nuther tarantula, wasn't it?" asked Shorty, a moment later.

"Great thrashing machines! I should say it was Tearin' Tuler's granddaddy himself."

"Whisky's the only remedy known for their bite," observed Shanks.

"Der only thing ter save 'em," said Shorty.

"Let's hasten to absorb some whisky then, neighbor Goodwood."

And the badly-scared pair made a break for the bar, where they absorbed so much whisky that an hour later they were observed hugging each other, and shouting for somebody to bring on a tarantula if they wanted to see it whipped.

The National Theater, or the "Old Drury," of Cincinnati, as it is called, was well filled to greet the New York Minstrels on their opening night. The boys did well and received plenty of applause. Shorty made a hit in a new song called "A Trip Across the Rhine," bringing down the house. Taken all in all, the performance was a good one, the audience well pleased, and the treasury showing a handsome balance over all expenses.

"Pretty good for old Cincinnati," remarked Shanks, as they left the theater for a knock around the city before turning in.

"You bet, dat was a good, solid payin' old house dere ter-night. A feller dat'd grumble at der crowd would kick a hen 'cause she didn't lay her eggs already boiled," answered Shorty, balancing his cane lightly on his forefinger to the disgust of an old gentleman who was passing, and who expected to see it drop on his nose.

After scooping in all the billiard halls, keno layouts, ten-pin alleys and gay places about town, Shorty and Shanks started back to the hotel. They were meandering quietly along Vine Street, when Shanks suddenly stopped, and pointed to a billboard on which was printed a notice that the rival show would open at Melodeon Hall the next night.

"Dem hamfatters are follerin' up our tracks ter close ter suit this oyster. I thought they'd pull out an' drop on themselves after dat las' racket in Pittsburgh; but I s'pose dey think dey can bust in an' scoop in half der crowd by layin's close ter us," remarked Shorty.

"Once burnt, twice shy, don't appear to work in their case; one thing certain, if they go to putting up any more jobs on our crowd, they'll find it'll be twice burnt," said Shanks.

"I don't see how dey're goin' ter get der chance ter give us much of a racket, if dey open ter-morrow night as dey're billed for," observed E. W., thoughtfully.

"Don't their show shut up some three-quarters of an hour before ours does?"

"Dat's so, by crickey."

"You could cut down our programme so as to close about the same time and still have a rousing bill," suggested Shanks.

"Cut down nothin'; I wouldn't cut der printer's name off der bottom of der programme if dere were fifty hamfatin' gangs howlin' fur fifty years; dat's der kind of sassage-meat I am," said Shorty, so pluckily that Shanks clapped his hands at his little partner's gameness.

Arriving at the hotel shortly afterwards, they found the rest of the troupe, and communicated to them the news.

"Coming here to open to-morrow?" inquired Tambo.

"I call that crowding the mourners," said Dave Reed.

"Do they want to 'tend another nutting party?" asked another.

"Where are they going to play at?"

"Melodeon Hall."

"Oh, I know the crib; it's a dumpy show they're going ter run down there."

"One thing dead sure, they mustn't break in on any more of my song and dances, or they'll find I'll break in on some of them," said Dave Reed.

"Now, fellers, I want ter tell yer all one thing. Dat hamfatin' crowd hav' cluded ter play in der same towns at der same time wid us, dat's all rite; der country's open ter anyone, only dere need ter be an understood thing dat rival companies wouldn't show at der same time 'cept by accident. Now dem hamfatin' snoozers dey tried ter put up a job on us in Pittsburgh, but we blocked der wheels from der word 'go,' an' paid dem off wid a racket dat took der starch out of dere collars, dat squared us; if dey want ter com' out 'ere an' run a quiet shebang, 'course dey've a rite ter do it," remarked Shorty, talking slowly and convincingly.

"But s'pose dey ain't satisfied an' tries ter start another job on us?" inquired Shanks.

"Der sequel to dat will be found in der next chapter," replied Shorty, so humorously that everybody roared.

The next morning our little hero and his inseparable companion, Shanks, had a hack sent to the door and started off for a drive around the city, visiting Eden, Washington, Lincoln, and Hopkins Parks, the Cincinnati observatory, and the water works. After leaving them they drove to one of the largest pork-packing houses, and were very much interested and amused at the neatness and dexterity with which a dozen, hundred or thousand full-grown, able-bodied porkers are disposed of.

"Dey comes in wid a fresh started grunt in der moun's, an' fore dey get der las' of dat grunt dey're bein' stuffed inter sausage skins an' der tail end of der grunt catches yer as dey're tyin' up der skins," said Shorty to the proprietor, who was showing them around.

"That's the quickest illustration of the case I ever listened to," laughed their host, and after thanking him kindly for the courtesy he had shown them, Shorty presented him with half a dozen of the best seats in the house for that night.

Leaving him, they drove across the Miami Canal and found themselves in the famous quarter known as "Over the Rhine."

No English being spoken in this quarter, it was comical to see Shorty and Shanks airing their German.

Stopping in front of a very pretty garden they alighted, and seating themselves at a table, were soon waited on by a pretty, blue-eyed German girl.

"Vouley vous some of"—began Shanks.

"Oh, cheese dat—dat ain't German," said Shorty; "lemme talk to der gal. Nix cumbersome, give us zwie lager; savey?"

The girl managed to gather an idea of what was required, and returned in a few minutes with a couple of foaming, stone mugs.

"What's der matter wid yer? Didn't I know dat my German is said ter be der best in der Bowery, New York? Why, I speak it so good I thort of givin' lessons in it," exclaimed Shorty, jubilantly.

The mugs were soon emptied, and Shorty insisted on setting them up again, along with the cigars, for the privilege of airing his German again.

"I wants to speak mit yer, missy; fill 'em up agin; plenty beer, nix froth, an' yer may fetch us zwie of yer best cigars. Don't yer try an' stick any of yer Jersey cabbage cheroots onto us; forsta?"

The girl didn't forsta by a long chalk, and Shorty went into a broken English statement of their wants; then Shanks mustered his few words of bad French and attacked her, but was forced to give up at the end of fifteen minutes and lean his head on his beer mug. Suddenly Shorty thought of a bright idea, and sticking up his fingers he commenced the deaf and dumb language; but the girl fled in terror and summoned three old women, who after long

and exhausting signals, made them understand that beer was wanted, and they sipped it in simple silence when they received it, paid their reckoning, treated the driver, and started back to Cincinnati.

"I say, Shanks, yer needn't say anythin' 'bout my speakin' dat German, or der deaf an' dumb biz ter anyone, 'cause if der fellers got hold on it dey'd never let up on a bloke," said Shorty, after a long pause.

"All right, Shorty, my boy, I'll be as dumb as a drum with a hole in it; an', by the way, maybe it'd be better if ye wouldn't mention my talkin' French, 'cause somehow or other I appear to have forgot some of the words, and the thing didn't work worth a cent," replied Shanks.

Their eyes met and both burst out in a hearty laugh.

"Shake, pard," laughed Shorty.

"Put it there, little one," said Shanks, and after a hearty and warm shake of hands they changed the subject.

On their way back to the hotel they met Manager Polly and Pettingill standing at the door of the Galt House, corner of Sixth and Main Streets, and bowed graciously to them, but received no answering salute.

After a splendidly served supper the troupe proceeded to the theater, and found that the Buckeye boys of Porkopolis had turned out *en masse* to welcome the visitors from the Empire State and the "Old Drury," with its immense seating capacity, was crowded from orchestra to roof.

The boys did well, and the opening part was splendidly rendered, act following act along without a jar or a bungle, and the audience expressed their delight by long and often-repeated rounds of applause.

"Half an hour more an' the show 'll be over," said Shanks, who was standing at a side scene.

"But we aint goin' ter get over dat half hour widout an interrupshun," replied Shorty, who had, by closely scrutinizing through an opera-glass, detected a party that had just entered and were standing up at the extreme back part of the house.

"Why, do you see anything?"

"Yee up, I see more dan half of Polly's gang strung 'long der wall back dere. Yer can see der reason dat I put my monkey act way down ter der foot, so's I could hev der stage when der racket comes off," continued Shorty.

"Oh, mebbe they didn't come to give us a roast, but only to pick up some fresh gags of ours to use," said Tambo.

"Yer must be pretty fresh yerself ter think anythin' of that kind," answered Shorty.

"Then you think there's some dodge in the wind?" asked Shanks.

"I'd bet a thousand dollars 'gainst a hole in der heel of my socks dat dere is," said Shorty, then, turning to a couple of double clog and dance men who were waiting for the bell to ring them on, he continued: "I want dem feet of your'n ter move same as der band of music was in dem, an' not in the orchestra. Mind your p's and q's an' yer biz, an' let 'em howl blue blazes if der want ter."

The bell tingled, and the clog dancers ran out, hand in hand, and bowed amidst much applause, while Shorty ran off to his dressing-room to slip on his monkey dress.

The double clog was well done and received an encore, and the act passed off without the sign of an interruption, so that even Shorty's belief in the other troupe being there for mischief was somewhat shaken.

The next was Shorty's famous monkey act, the one in which you will remember they put up the racket on him in Buffalo, and he knew it would irritate them to see him in it, as it was a part in which he was unapproachable. Therefore, no sooner had he bounded upon the stage than the whole house roared, and he was starting into his part, when a half-madman was seen walking down the center aisle to the stage, where he carefully deposited a box, and said:

"Dome gemmens zat zib me ze box wans youze to open it zon the stage."

"Yes, open it, Jocko," shouted one of the audience.

"Open it!" roared a hundred voices.

"Boys, if yer'll jest shut yer mouth an' give yer ears a chance, I'll open it for yer. Fust while der carpenter is comin' let me read this ter yer.

"A NEW STAR DESIRES AN ENGAGEMENT IN YER TROUPE, AS HE THINKS HE WOULD BE AT HOME."

The crowd laughed heartily as crowds who are on the anxious seat always do, and the carpenter arriving with a hammer and chisel, removed the lid and disclosed to Shorty a little dead, six-week old shoat of a pig.

Shorty knew that to hesitate a second was to be lost, and seizing the little pig in his arms, he held it up before the audience and exclaimed:

"Run! half a dozen of yer ter Manager Polly, an' tell him his chile has kicked der bucket."

The point was given at the very second, and the audience screamed, shouted, roared, yelled, applauded, and made the walls of the National tremble.

"Gemmen," exclaimed Shorty, grabbing the tiny pig in his arms and scrambling up on the back of the chair, where he pretended to be nursing it. "I hold in my arms der natural offspring of der manager of der snide minstrels. Every feelin' heart from Maine ter der Pacific will shudder at der cold-blooded desire to refuse his own child a proper funeral. Yer needn't sneak off dere, Mister Polly, wid yer hamfatters, 'cause yer hear a few solid ol' trufs."

"Fetch 'em ter de front."

"They'd better go sling mud at themselves."

"Let's see der gang anyhow."

"Gemmen," said Shorty, after he could make himself heard amongst the uproar. "Dat's der second racket of dem snoozers, an' in each of dem dey got such an old-fashion'd bilkin' dat I guess dey'll commence ter take a tumble ter demselves an' lite out of here. Der show will now wag 'long."

And it did wag along; it wagged along amidst such thunders of applause that the watchmen and policemen blocks away thought it was a riot, and were badly sold, when, after rapping and signaling a posse from the nearest station-houses, to find it was only a tribute of appreciation being bestowed by the Buckeye boys to their eastern brethren from the metropolis.

"I had 'tended ter let dat 'skip-it-by-night' gang 'lone, sure as flies love ter light on bald heads; but I see now dat dey're follerin' us up an' puttin' up dese rackets on us, 'cause it gets dem notorious; an' dey're misable snide show gets ots of fellers ter tend, in hopes dey'll be dere when we return der racket. But yer hear my gentle voice, der job I's goin' ter put on dem dis time'll not only sicken dem, but dere won't be such a crowd ter witness der fun," said Shorty, to his friend Shanks, as they were walking home from the theater that night.

"When will you give them a blast?"

"Lemme see, ter day's Tuesday; ter-morrer dey'll have a swell matinee. Tell der boys I'll 'spect 'em 'round ter see der fun, for when Shorty puts up a racket he generally puts up one dat'll stick."

After a good breakfast next morning, Shorty started off down town, and stopping in at a large agricultural store on Hammond Street, he asked the proprietor:

"Can yer get me a hive of bees dis morning. I don't care 'bout der price, but I must have 'em."

"Yes, sir, I can get you one."

"Den 'fi was ter send yer down a trunk could yer fix 'em in it for me an' send it ter der directions I'll leave yer, or give it ter any one I send?"

"Certainly."

"Dat's settled den," said Shorty, pulling out a roll of bills and paying the man.

He next proceeded to a trunk store and bought a small, cheap trunk, on which he had painted the directions, and the following:

"Bee-ware."

"To be opened on the Stage."

Having sent the trunk down to where he had purchased the bees, Shorty's next move was to find somebody to carry it.

He had no trouble in procuring a stout, happy, good-natured darkey, who for a five dollar note would have delivered it to Saint Peter, if he could have found him.

After partaking of a light and early lunch, the New York Minstrels got themselves ready to attend their rival's performance.

"I want yer ter squat yerselves as far back ter der door as yer can, so yer can climb out inter der street if der racket should get too hot ter stan' it," said Shorty, as they left the hotel for the Melodeon, corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets.

The house was a little over half full when our party arrived and took their seats at the back part of the house, and Manager Polly felt that he was in for another racket the moment he set eyes on them.

Shorty let the show run about half way through when, beckoning to the colored man who was

standing near the door, he whispered some words to him, and a moment later the darkey was seen stalking down to the stage with the trunk on his shoulder.

"De gemmen zat gibs me dis tells me to say dat it is a little gift fur de minstrels, an' he wants yer ter open it on de stage, sah."

"Take your trunk away."

"Open it on the stage!" roared fifty voices in the audience, who had been present when the box had been sent to the New Yorkers.

"Gentlemen, you must excuse me, but I am convinced this is a practical joke of a very dirty nature, very likely, and I must beg you to allow me to remove it," said Polly, advancing to the footlights and bowing.

"Open that ther trunk jest where it lays, or my gang'll clean out dis yere house!" threatened a rough.

"Yes, you've got ter open it just where it is 'thout no sheaanegan. Dat other minstrel troupe opened dere's, an' you've got ter open yours, or we'll bust up der show!" yelled another.

"Oh, certainly, gentlemen," answered Polly, fearing he was going to be cleaned out. "I want all this troupe to be here and witness that the contents of the trunk are the same as I represent them."

The minstrels gathered around the trunk, and stood prepared to verify every article it contained, and during the most intense excitement Manager Polly unlocked the trunk, the key having been left in it, and raised the lid; as he did so there was an angry hum as a thousand aggravated, vexed and savage bees were let loose.

The scene that followed is one that it is in vain for pen to paint. Dozens of the angry insects lit upon the different members of the company, who howled, fought, screamed, and darted off the stage, followed by their stinging enemies. And for the next ten minutes the house was a perfect pandemonium. Song and dance men ran head first into sentimental singers. The orchestra dropped their instruments and took refuge in flight. Polly tried to brass it out and get order out of chaos, but after fifty bees had interviewed him, he kicked the trunk into the orchestra and fled, leaving a stream of blue profanity floating behind him.

"Dere, boys, I guess we'll pull out and hunt up a place where we can get a coolin' drink, fer I'm dry laughin' at der way dem snoozers 'll look ter-night wid der heads all swelled up from der bites," laughed Shorty, and they adjourned into the sunlight.

"Guess dat's all der rackets dey'll want ter carry round in der clothes for some time," he continued.

The rest of their stay in Cincinnati was a pleasant one; they had good houses, lots of fun in the city and "across the Rhine," and left when their engagements were up with considerable reluctance.

The Dayton and Michigan Railroad provided a special car for their accommodation, and the boys had a high old time of it on their way to Detroit, which was the next city mapped out and billed for them. Songs, stump speeches, jokes, gags, cards, dominoes, and lots of other fun, helped to make the time pass pleasantly, and they reached Detroit even before they were aware of it.

CHAPTER IX.

We left our friends, the New York Minstrels, at the depot in Detroit after their run from Cincinnati.

"Hack? Come this way, sir!" shouted a long, lank driver, seizing Shorty by the lappel as he was descending from the train.

"Haddn't yer better keep yer paws ter yerself?" inquired Shorty, fetching the hack-driver a rap over his knuckles with his gold-headed cane, that caused him to let go and go dancing around the depot with his skinned knuckles in his mouth, only re-

moving them long enough to explain to the passengers and his brother hackmen a plan he had for exterminating every little runt in the country.

"Hack! hack, sir! hack! hack, captain! hack! hack, boss! hack, mister! hack! hack! hack!" rang out on every side of our little party as they walked quietly through and admired that magnificent Michigan Central Depot building.

"It appears a fellow's got to ride whether he wants to or not in this city," remarked Shanks, glancing ahead of him at a forest of whips, bad hats, cunning, dirty faces, and the everlasting din of "hack! hack!"

"Some of dem ort ter hack som' of dat dirt off dere faces 'f they ain't scared of catchin' cold," answered Shorty. "Dat advance agent of ourn must hav' forgot ter order carriages for us, so I s'pose we'll hav' ter pick out der men with der fewest inches of dirt on dere mugs, an' ride."

"Mak' way dere, small fry, foah Ise wuss dan a short-tailed bull in de fly time. Clar de way, foah Ise de boss niggah 'roun' dis yere town, an' 'n butt ye puct ye'd think ye'd been struck by de cow-catcher of de bulgine," shouted a big, seven-foot darkey, with lots of eyes, mouth, good nature and strength, elbowing his way through the crowd till he came to our little hero and his friends, when, hauling off his battered felt hat, he asked:

"Am dis Misser Shorty an' party?"

"Dis is der crowd," answered Shorty.

"De kerriges, Misser Shorty, is rite out yere," answered the darkey, pointing to a spot on the other side of the shouting, howling crowd, who had closed up the gap and stood opening their mouths like automotons with the cry of "hack, sir?"

"I'm glad ter learn dere's wagons some place, but I'm 'traid 't would take a buffalo-bull ter get us through dat gang so's we could get inter dem," said Shorty, looking up at his seven-foot friend and wondering how he was ever going to pilot them through.

"Pshaw, boss! Ise gwine ter make a passage for ye; jest follow me to der kerriges, if yer please," he answered, with a broad grin on his face. Tucking his battered hat into a strap he wore about his waist, he ducked his head, and with a "Clar de way, fur de boss niggah in Detroit is somewhar 'roun'," he ran straight for the center of the crowd. The first man whom he butted flew up and tried to kick the sky. Straight ahead, as if he were a freshly-discharged cannon-ball, went the giant darkey, while the crowd separated and fled as if a mad bull had broken loose.

"Howly Virgin! I'm kilt—I'm kilt! The devil a drop ov wind has the thick-headed naggur left in me!" exclaimed an Irishman, jumping out of the gutter, where he had been butted, and looking at his broken whip.

"Donder vetter!—ter tyvel! Vhal for dot plack loaver hits me mit his head in mein stomach? Dot ish an awful ding," said a German hackman, crawling out from under his horse's feet with an agility surprising in a man of his size.

"Great thunder! do you want to murder me by breaking my spine?" called out a fat, puffing hackman, who had received the darkey's head in the small of his back, and was hanging on to an ash barrel, and feeling of his backbone.

By the time the giant darkey had got through the crowd that sidewalk looked as if forty locomotives had broken loose and been plowing up things generally. On every side, and in every attitude were piled cursing, howling, bruised and butted hackmen.

"Ye see, cap'n, dis nig's either gwine ter be de boss nig in de puddle, or he's gwine ter let his har grow an' go down Souf fur a misshunary man. In de meantime Ise 'roun' when de whistle blows. Heah is de kerriges, gemmen. My name is Sam, sah. If ever ye should want a nig ter butt, Jess lemme know, an' I'll shake a stone wall."

It transpired that Shorty wanted to see him just then, and the chink of coin in Sam's palm caused him to smile from ear to ear; then Shanks wanted to see him, and then one after the other, till the whole troupe dropped all their loose silver into his paws. Then the carriages drove away to the Russell House, where rooms had been engaged for them.

"Dose gemmen mebbe nashunal banks in disguise, or dey's mebbe bonanza fellers dat owns silber mines; but dar is one p'int on which Ise particular clar, an' dat is dey've got de pleasantest way of droppin' de cash inter a nig's hand 'thout bein' all ober demselves ter see if dey ain't got ruffin' smaller ter give. Nuder fac' I may as well 'splain, is dat Sam Johnson is gwine ter stick pow'ful clus ter dem while dey're yere," soliloquized Sam, as he tied his silver up in a red and yellow handkerchief, stuck it in his bosom, and, after giving a scornful look at the irate hackmen, who were shaking their fists at him, he followed the carriages back to the Russell House, where he was employed.

After arriving at the hotel and registering, Shorty and Shanks paid a visit to their large and handsomely-furnished rooms on the first floor, and were washing and brushing the stain marks of travel from their garments, when they heard a hand-organ on the sidewalk below suddenly strike up. "O, Willie, we have missed you," and the next moment some one in the next room was heard stamping around, swearing horribly, then the bell was rung violently, and a waiter dispatched to put the kibosh on "Willie, we have missed you."

"I'm goin' ter hev' a squint at dat ole mustard pot in der nex' room. He seems worse dan a house afire ter hear 'im cussin' an' snortin'," said Shorty, after they had finished their toilets.

"How are you going to get a squint?"

"Why, easy 'nuff. Yer Jess wait 'ere for a few minutes and I'll tell yer all 'bout 'im," said Shorty, going out into the hall, and walking up to the stranger's door, opened it and entered.

"Here! hellol who the devil 're you?" asked a short, dumpy, baldheaded, red-faced, harsh-voiced little man, whose usual ugly temper was aggravated by an attack of the gout.

"Beg your pardon, old beefsteak. No need of yer bustin' yer biler," said Shorty, who took in his whole appearance, character, and surroundings at a glance.

"What do you mean, you villainous dwarf, by breaking into people's rooms in this manner?"

"You'd ort ter get a stomjack pump 'tached ter yer innards an' try if dey couldn't pump som' of dat mean cussedness out of yer," replied Shorty, backing himself toward the door.

"Oh, you housebreaking baboon you, I'd like to have you in my clutches once!" shouted the stranger, shaking his crutch at Shorty.

"Yer goin' ter hav' a bully ol' stroke of appleplexy, I'll bet. Crickey, what an ugly, purple-headed ol' stiffey yer'll make; ta-tal!" said Shorty, kissing his hand gayly in the direction of the raging but impotent old Tartar.

Descending to the office, Shorty overhauled the register, and found that the gentleman he had called upon rejoiced in the name of Snappem; then, passing into the dining-hall, they put themselves outside of as snifty a dinner as could be dished up to them.

"Well, pard, what's the first move on the board?" asked Shanks, when they had finished their meal and were selecting cigars at the stand.

"I guess we may as well slide down der street as far as der Opera House, an' scoop der buildin' an' der 'rangements all in."

"Let's skate, then," said Shanks.

On the block below the hotel, they ran across an organ-grinder, whom Shorty immediately hired to proceed to the hotel and play for the next hour under the corner window. At the Soldiers' Monument he picked up two more and engaged them for the rest of the afternoon, giving them all the necessary directions.

Shorty and Shanks were very much pleased with the appearance of the Opera House, which is really one of the finest buildings in the country of that kind. Shorty found that everything had been looked after, and that a large portion of the best seats in the house had already been secured.

"Dat's all hypercoon; now let's get a hack an' drive 'round der city. I want ter see 'fi can't scare up some music ter amuse Mr. Snappem."

"I commence to take a first-class tumble to myself," laughed Shanks. Hailing a hack that was passing, they entered, and were driven through the Campus Martius, Woodward, Michigan and Monroe avenues, and managed to secure half a dozen more. These they arranged so as to have them succeed each other during the evening hours, and last and greatest they came across a Teutonic band of four pieces, who were hired for midnight.

"Dere," said Shorty, after he had paid the last one a quarter in advance as a retaining fee, "if ole Snappem don't have 'nuff music ter-night ter keep 'im on der war-path, yer can chalk me down for a green gooseberry."

After enjoying a pleasant drive around the city they drove back to the hotel, where the first sight that struck their eyes was the gouty old gentleman at an open window, shaking his crutch, cursing in every language known, two weatherbeaten organ-grinders, who kept smiling, bowing and grinding out "Eileen Aicanna" and "Mulligan Guards" loud enough to be heard six blocks away.

Alighting from their carriage, Shorty and Shanks dropped a quarter into each organist's hand as they passed, much to the disgust of the old gentleman at the window, who shouted:

"Fire and brimstone! what in thunder are you giving them money for?"

"Slide in an' soak yer head, ol' fireworks, or der fust thing yer know you'll 'splode an' spile all der furniture wid yer remains," retorted Shorty, kissing his hand at him.

"Don't dare to speak to me, you impudent Tom Thumb," screamed the old man, slamming down his window only to slam it up again, and remark: "If you was half my size, you undergrown feller, I'd cane you, in spite of my sickness."

"Got a cane of my own, thank yer, an' it ain't der kerrect thing ter carry more'n one at a time, so I'll 'scuse yer, ol' camphene jug," said Shorty; and quite a number of persons, who had been attracted by the music and the strange behavior of old Snappem at his open window, burst into a hearty laugh.

Every half hour during that afternoon and evening was marked by the arrival of a fresh organ, the first notes of which would start old Gouty Snappem out of his chair as if he had been sitting on a pin, and after a period of howling, swearing, slamming his window open, threatening and bullying, he would dispatch a waiter to drive him away; but no sooner had he choked off "Tommy, Come

and sit beside your Auntie," and returned to his duties, than a sentimental grinder would take his place and render "Silver Threads Among the Gold," in a key that unlocked every particle of bile in old Snappem's system, and once more he would storm up and down the room, peppering the unfortunate musician with ink-stands, paper-weight, boot-jack and the soap-dish, much to the amusement of Shorty and his friends, and a crowd of youngsters who had assembled and set Snappem down as a raving lunatic, whose keeper had him locked up, and on his appearance he would be addressed with such little pleasant-ries as:

"Hello, lunny! wher' d' you 'scape from?"

"Hcw d'yer like de 'sylum?"

"You'd better look out, for if your keeper catches you at a wander, he'll clap you in a strait-jacket."

"Is all crazy fellers' faces as red an' cross-lookin' as his'n?" inquired a handkerchiefless boy with one suspender, in a shrill voice that made Snappem slam down the window and throw himself in an easy-chair in abot as quiet and peaceful a condition as a fresh-lit pack of fire-crackers.

The waiter was again summoned and ordered to dislodge "Silver Threads among the Gold," and it was only after being struck across the shins with "Silver Threads'" organ-stick, getting a black eye, two inches of skin peeled off his nose, and several handfuls of red threads pulled out of his head that he persuaded him to retire. On the waiter's return to the hotel, it was deemed advisable to put him in an arnica bath, gum him all over with sticking-plaster, and send him to an hospital.

There was a pause then for some ten minutes, and the crowd in Shorty's room had ventured to remove their handkerchiefs from their mouths, when suddenly on the soft twilight rang out clear as a bell:

"Oh, my name it is Josephus Orangeblossom, I'se de happiest little niggah in der lan'."

Why, the fact of his name being Josephus Orangeblossom should specially irritate and rile old Snappem I don't know, but he jumped higher, screamed louder, cursed wickeder, raved longer, pounded the floor with his crutch harder, slammed the window up quicker, and shrieked like ten steam-whistles.

"He's gettin' wuss," shouted one of the boys.

"I'll bet dey've got him chained by de foot ter de bed-post."

"I wonder how dey get in ter feed 'im?"

"Saw a hole in der cellin' an' drop de grub down ter 'im, an' der keeper tol' a feller that tol' my dad dat sometimes he eats der feather pillars an' half der keeper's clothes up 'fore dey can stop 'im," answered a truthful, freckled-faced boy.

"What is it, boys?" asked a citizen, stopping and looking up.

"A 'scaped loonytic, sir; he's killed two men an' an' ol' lady 'fore dey cofched him; dey're keepin' 'im chained up dere till dey get a strait-jacket made for 'im," explained Truthful James, number two.

"Dear—dear me," said the man, staring at Snappem; "well he is an awful vicious, bloodthirsty-looking creature," and he passed on to tell every one he met about the lunatic murderer they had confined at the Russell House.

"You're an awful old liar," yelled Snappem.

"They ort ter bleed 'im; see how red his face is," suggested a woman, with a basket and two moist-nosed children.

"Bleed the d—l!" roared Snappem.

"An' put chunks of ice on his ugly bald head," said a man who kept a store around the corner.

"I'd chunk you, you idiot, if I had hold of you," roared Snappem.

"Gracious, ain't he savage."

"Mebbe dey'll hav' ter get der perlice an' sojers ter shoot 'im," said an imaginative youth with a pocket full of peanuts which he was shucking into himself.

Then Snappem slammed down the window, but the sweet, inspiring strains of "Josephus Orangeblossom" still floated in upon him, aggravating him to such a pitch that he mashed the foot-board of his bed into tooth-picks for the poor of Detroit with his crutch, and rang violently for a waiter.

"Number ten again! That man wants more waitin' on than all the rest of the guests in the hotel," said the clerk, as he dispatched a waiter, who was at once ordered to drive "Josephus Orangeblossom" to the uttermost end of the earth.

Mindful of how the other waiter had been skinned, wooled, and mauled, waiter number two resolved on diplomacy, and, approaching Josephus, he managed, by the aid of a torn ten-cent stamp, a pair of brass sleeve-buttons, a pawn ticket, and a promise of all the cold chicken he could eat, to induce Josephus to meander.

"Oh, carry me out and bury me decently!" laughed Shanks, as the last strains of the hand-organ died away.

"Let me laugh myself to death 'n my boots!" said Dave Reed, uncovering his head.

"Shook harder than if I'd had half a dozen agues all at once," said Sambo.

"Der racket worked like a house afire; yer boys want ter 'member, though, an' not give it away ter anybody," said Shorty, coming over from the window, where he had been watching the fun from behind the curtain.



"Great thunder! do you want to murder me?" called out the fat, puffing hackman.

After making their toilets, which consisted of a brush, wash and drink, the New Yorkers started down the stairs to supper, just as a new organ-grinder proceeded to render "The Blue Danube," in such an agonizing manner that the wall paper commenced to curl up on the wall, and the gouty old gentleman was heard climbing out from under the bed, where he had concealed himself and shouting madly for a shot-gun.

After supper the boys fired up fresh cheroots, went into the smoking-room, and watched a waiter wrestling with "The Blue Danube." It was a short and sanguinary affair. The waiter caught "The Blue Danube" by the coat-collar, and was pulling him away, when the latter let fly a tidal wave with his left fist that caught the unsuspecting waiter on the eye, and seated him on the sidewalk without losing a note. Then the white-aproned waiter rushed in on him, and tried to catch him by the throat; but "The Blue Danube" welked him over the head with his organ stick, and the waiter, after kicking a hole in the organ, retired to the hotel for repairs, while "The Blue Danube," after examining the damage done his organ, started up the street, making the spring air howl with Italian profanity.

A ripping house for a first night greeted the New York Minstrels. Everybody came to see a good show, enjoy a hearty laugh, and that they were not disappointed was proved by the encores, cheers, and loud applause that followed each performer's part. Dave Reed got off a new song and dance that took immense; but the hit of the evening was made by Shorty in a stump speech, in which he had cunningly managed to introduce a lot of city gags and cuts at fellows around the city that everybody knew, winding up with a laughable description of the hack-drivers' gang they had met on their arrival. As many of the hackmen were present, and were identified at once by the boys in the gallery, you can imagine the fun and excitement that followed, and shouts from the gods of:

"Shand up, Red Mike, that drives the broken-eared plug!"

"Show der ladies an' folks yer pretty mug, Sandy McFadden, dat's got der broken-winded team!"

"Are yer goin' home ter put some poultices on der swell-legs of dat team of yourn?" shouted a bare-footed gutter-snipe, as a man was observed making his way quietly to the door.

Shout after shout of laughter went up from the audience as each well-known figure tried to shrink out of sight, and the curtain dropped finally amidst hundreds of applause.

Leaving the theater, after they had changed their clothes and removed the cork, the company strolled back to the hotel in a body.

"Great crickey, look a dere!" exclaimed Shorty, as they turned the corner, pointing with his finger to where the four brass horn players, that he had engaged in the afternoon, had taken up their position under Snappem's window, and were loosening the very bricks in the chimney with the ear-splitting blasts of "Dot leedle Garman Pand," while above, Snappem, in his night-shirt and bare legs, with a face like a boiled beet, was hurling four-story curses and china wash-basins at them.

After leaning up against the railing on the other side of the street, the New Yorkers laughed till they were sore to see Snappem dart in, slam the window, only to reappear two minutes later, redder in the face than ever, with some fresh profanity, an empty bottle and a door-knob to hurl.

"S'pose we giv' der ol' bloke a rest, tho' dat ol' red-pepper bottle of a Snappem don't deserve any, for I'll bet all of my ulster overcoat dat der moths has left against a ten cent diamond pin dat he'd hammer his modder ober der snoot wid 'is crutch 'f he caught her lookin' at 'im sideways," said Shorty; and they dismissed "Dot leedle Garman Pand," and betook themselves to the hotel.

As Shorty and Shanks went up to their room to bed that night they found Snappem's door open, and that irritable personage sitting in a rocking chair, amidst the wreck of the furniture, fanning himself with a newspaper and muttering wholesale threats at the musical world in general.

"Hello, pard, reg'lar ol'-get-up-an'-crawl-from-under town for music dis, ain't it?" inquired Shorty, stepping into the doorway and winking.

"Get out of there, you lmp; 'tis none of your infernal business what I think," howled Snappem, looking around for something to throw.

"How d'yer lik' der seelchshuns? I tell yer what old sore toes, Josephus Orangeblossom would fetch water outer a dry pump. Shouldn't wonder if dere was a brass band comin' 'long pretty soon ter serenade yer," said Shorty.

"Go to thunder! go to blazes! I'll murder somebody 'fore I leave this cussed house!" roared Snappem, wildly pawing the air.

"I'm just as near der blazes as I want ter be when I see clus ter yer ol' bombshells."

"Go to the dickens! go to Guinea! I'd give half a million dollars, if I had it, for a double-barreled shot-gun and all the ammunition I could shoot."

"Shoot nothin'; why yer couldn't shoot a bed bug. Put a wet towel round that fiery ol' mug of yer's and crawl into bed, and I'll buy yer a pint of fresh-roasted peanuts first ting in der mornin'," said Shorty, going out and into his own room, and leaving Snappem raving and groaning over the prospective serenade.

Somehow or other, the organ racket leaked out the next day; an irrepressible reporter of the *Detroit Free Press* got hold of it, and the paper came out with half a column about it, that set everybody in the city in a laugh and crowded the Opera House every evening, till "Standing Room Only" was hung out every night during their stay, before the curtain rose.

The troupe did their best to excel, and their efforts were appreciated.

Shorty at once won his way into the affections of the boys of Detroit, by his constantly planning some racket that would set everybody laughing for the next twenty-four hours.

But the week finally drew around, and the New York Minstrels, with a fresh link in their chain of friendship, packed up their worldly goods, and took the Wash and Western Railroad back towards St. Louis, which was their next show town.

The trip was a long and uneventful one. The railroad passed through some of the finest farming land in the world.

The troupe had engaged a special car for themselves; and, between euchre, seven-up, and other games, managed to pass the time pleasantly.

They arrived in St. Louis late on Saturday evening, and were driven at once to the Planter's Hotel. Rooms had been secured for the company at the Southern, but the total destruction of that building by fire made them change their head-quarters.

CHAPTER X.

Our readers will recollect that we left our little hero and his troupe, on their arrival, at the Planter's Hotel, St. Louis.

"It's customary to register your name on your arrival," said a supercilious clerk, with his hair parted in the middle, and a diamond as big as a teacup on his snirt front.

"Shoot der quill over 'ere den," said Shorty.

The clerk glanced down at him coldly and disdainfully as he tossed down a pen, and pushed the register toward him.

Our hero eyed him quizzically as he dashed off in his bold, quaint writing, the single word "Shorty."

"See here—see here, this thing won't do, you know. I want your real name, not your nickname," said the flashy clerk, picking his teeth with the end of a pen-handle.

"Guess dat one'll have ter do yer, Mister Dandy Jim," replied Shorty, coolly.

"Oh, no, that won't answer at all. Here's what I want," explained the clerk, pointing to a clearly-written address of "Edwin T. Smith, Pottsville, Penn."

"Dat's what yer want, is it? Why didn't yer squeal in der fust place?" said Shorty, taking the pen and dashing off Edwin T. Smith, Pottsville, Penn. "Dere, how'll dat suit yer imperial nibs?" he continued, throwing down the pen and pushing the book over to the clerk.

"But, sacrificed heavens! your name is not Edwin T. Smith, is it?" demanded the clerk, becoming very indignant and excited, as he saw a broad grin passing over the faces of all the parties standing around.

"Course not."

"And you don't live at Pottsville, Pennsylvania?"

"Never was in der place in my life."

"Then, why, sir, and what do you mean, sir, by signing another man's name?" exclaimed the clerk, working himself up to a fever heat.

"If yer keep on workin' yerself any hotter, I'll hav' ter giv' der fire 'larm and fetch a couple of engines down to play on yer, an' keep yer from settin' yer shirt afire," answered Shorty, cool as a cucumber, and with a comical look in his eyes.

"What made you sign that name and ruin the looks of my register, I say?"

"Cause yer tol' me ter."

"I tol' you to, sir?"

"Yes, yer said 'ere's what I want,' and yer pinter ter Smith's name, an' now dat you've got it yer act as if yer'd eat somethin dat didn't 'gree wid yer, or mebbe it's dat diamond payin' stun dat's makin' yer round shouldered carryin' it," said Shorty, so quaintly that the rest of the troupe burst out laughing, in which they were joined by all the outsiders who had overheard the conversation.

"Never you mind that diamond pin. All I want you to understand is that you can't come around here playing any of your smart tricks, for I won't have it."

"Don't see how yer goin' ter 'scape 'em 'thout yer climb up der chimney."

"Now, allowing that you do bear that ridiculous name of Shorty, it is necessary for to enter where you come from."

"Will yer sot it down?"

"Yes. Where was it?"

"Yer all ready, are yer?"

"Yes, yes?"

"Den yer can sot down dat I came from der depot."

"Great State of Missouri! Are you trying to make a fool out of me, you undergrown bantam?"

"Bantam is good. No, dere's no 'cessity in me tryin' ter make yer what natur has done afore me," retorted Shorty, coddlingly.

"Where you'r home is, is what I'm trying to drive through your thick skull," said the clerk, red up to the back of the ears, and mad enough, as he slung books and things around, to light matches on.

"My home is wherebber I hang up my hat," said Shorty.

"But you must have come from some place in particular," persisted the clerk.

"Some place in whar?"

"In particular."

"Don't think I eber showed in dat place."

"If you wasn't the stupidest runt in the world, you'd know I meant where you belonged to."

"Oh, where I belong ter! Why couldn't yer get dat through yerself in der fust place?"

"Well, where do you belong?"

"I guess dat yer can sot dis clothes-pin down as beloug'n' ter der New York Minstrels, der boss gang dat eber showed up round 'ere."

The clerk threw down his pen and stalked moodily up and down behind the counter, while the lookers-on laughed and applauded.

After a good supper, such as they knew how to dish up at the Planter's Hotel, Shorty and Shanks strolled out for a ramble, scooping in De Bar's Opera House, the Apollo Gardens and the Varieties Theater, the latter being a flash show, for gentlemen only.

Just as they were leaving the Varieties they ran across a big, innocent, six foot countryman, who had come down to town with a load of produce, and having disposed of it was seeing all the sights he could. Shorty's diminutive stature immediately caught his eyes, and approaching our hero he said in a rough, good-natured voice:

"I say, littul stranger, wuld it make you hog-killin' mad if a feller that hails from Bissell's Point was to ax you if you'd allus been as small as y'are?"

"Small's I am, why Mister Telegraf-pole I used ter be 'bout yer size," said Shorty, casting a comical look up at his new acquaintance.

"Wal, I vum. How d'you come to be so short now?" said country, looking at him open-mouthed.

"Well, yer see, I fell out of a balloon when I was 'bout ten thousan' feet up an' struck on my head in a sand heap, an' when a lot of folks who seen me tumblin' run an' got dere shovels an' dug down forty-seven feet ter where I was dey foun' dat

I'd been druv down ter dis size," explained Shorty to the countryman, who, with eyes and ears bulging out, drank in every word.

"By cucumbers and tomats! that's erful. Did it hurt you much?"

"No, dat's one of the sing'larest things 'bout it, dere wasn't no pain of any 'count, but nobody know'd me. When I went to my store my pardner bounced me for an impostor. My wife got mad an' slammed der door in my face, said she'd married a slashin' big feller, an' she'd break der nex' runt's head dat com' round dem doors; den my aunt, whose heir I was, sent for me, but as soon as she spotted me she yelled and threw pillers at me, and wound up by makin' some oder ol' bloke her heir; der only men dat knew me 'tall was dose I owed money ter, an' I think dey knew me 'fore I struck der sand bank comin' down," exclaimed Shorty, who was in a talkative humor.

They were passing through Pine street, when they came across a man with an electric galvanic battery, standing on one of the corners, and Shorty hopped at the chances of a racket quicker than a hungry hen goes for the first grasshopper of the season.

"Oh, here's fun. Come, stranger, I'll bet yer der drinks dat I can hol' dem handles as long as yer can," said Shorty.

"Hold those thar sticks. Why, little feller, I could hold them for six months."

Shorty slipped half a dollar into the operator's hand, unseen, and gave him the wink; then, turning to his agricultural friend, he said as he picked up the handles:

"Time me now."

The farmer produced an enormous silver bull's-eye watch from his fob, and followed the minutes with his thumb nail, while the operator allowed only sufficient current to tingle him to escape.

"Ten minutes," said the farmer, after a pause.

"An' dat's ebery plagued minit I can hol' dem, an' I don't believe dere's many fellers roun' dese corners can hol' dem longer," said Shorty, dropping them as if they were made of lead.

"Then ther's a pow'ful weak set of critters round here, is all I've got to say," said Greeny, taking hold of the handles.

"Hev yer got a good squar grip on 'em?" asked Shorty.

"A team of oxen couldn't budge 'em—here!—hello!—darnation! Great everlasting squashes! but ther's needles runnin' down inter my toes!" yelled the farmer, as the operator opened the full force of the current upon him.

"Why don't you drop them?" asked a stranger, coming up and laughing.

"How in seven different kinds of thunder can I?" yelled the frightened farmer, who was writhing around, dancing, shouting, kicking, turning somersaults, and waking up everybody within seven blocks.

The operator checked the current a minute later, and the countryman arose, jammed on his felt hat, looked at his hands for a minute, then took a long, slow look around the crowd that his yells had brought together, and asked:

"Did any you men happen to see a stumpy runt of a feller that dropped from a balloon ten thousand feet inter a sand bank?"

"Well, mebbe it's just as well, for I'd have dropped him ten thousand feet more inter another sand bank if I could get my flippers on him," he continued on, no one present appearing to know the parties in question.

"An' you'r the man that set me a-howlin', are you?" he exclaimed, reaching over the battery and catching the terrified operator by the shirt band; he dragged him across, shook him like a rat, kicked the battery into the gutter, and started up the street, exclaiming:

"I'm wuss nor a buffalo bull an' a den of rattlesnakes, when I get woke up, an' 'fi ever catch that runt ther'll be a funeral in the runt family."

Meanwhile, our friends, Shorty and Shanks, were quietly meandering back to the hotel, having skipped out as soon as they saw the racket started and the countryman prancing around.

Our friends turned in very soon after their return to the hotel, feeling tired after their long journey in the cars, and slept soundly till after the first bell had sounded for breakfast next morning.

"Well, Shorty, old chum, what's the programme for Sunday?" asked Shanks, as he sat down his empty coffee cup after a sumptuous breakfast, and wiped his mustache.

"Dun'no yet; I ain't fixed up anythin' yet, but I s'pose we'd better get a high rollin' buggy wid a spankin' team, and scoop in some of dese parks an' drives 'round 'ere for luck," answered Shorty, stirring the sugar in his cup.

"Yes, that would be hunky."

"Dere's one thing dat I've workin' on ever since I struck dis hotel, an' dat is, dat I'se goin' ter put up a racket on dat pill garlie of a clerk, er yer can sot Shorty down as a cotton-headed muf," said our hero, earnestly.

"But how in the world are you going to get a chance at him?" asked Shanks, thoughtfully.

"Yer leave all dat ter me, pard. Keep fly; an' when I want yer I'll give yer der offs. One thing I can't stumick, an' dat is der frills dat dat ink-slingin' snoozer, wid his dollar diamond an' his

hair split in der middle puts on. Why, yer'd think he owned der city an' was a bigger man dan der President, but yer can bet yer moss agates dat he'll wish he was little 'nough ter crawl through a mouse-trap 'fore I get through wid 'im," continued Shorty, getting up from the table and strolling into the smoking-room.

"Yes, that clerk's one of them kind of fellows that it would be a bully speculation to buy them for what they're worth and sell them for what they think they're worth," said Shanks.

"I'll bet dat der feller dat'd give more'n two cents for 'im would be so badly stuck dat he'd shoot his bargain fust, an' hisself arterwards," laughed Shorty.

"If they'd dig a hole some place and drive him into it, he'd make a good post to hitch horses to," suggested Shanks.

"Let's go an' see 'bout gettin' a team for our drive," said Shorty, and lighting their cigars they went around to a first-class livery stable, where, having made known their wants, they were soon placed, in possession of a nobby, two-seated buggy, and as spanking and showy a team of trotters as you could scare up in St. Louis.

"Now dis is what I call takin' solid comfort an' fun all in der one dose," said Shorty, leaning back and handling the ribbons.

"Yes, it is pretty high-tonish," said Shanks.

Just as they were passing Lafayette Park they came across their agricultural friend of the night before, driving four immense, sleepy-looking mules, attached to a Noah's ark of a wagon.

"Hey, you runt, you, hold on. I want to see you," he yelled, getting out his black-snake whip as soon as he saw Shorty.

"Good-mornin', flag-pole! How long d'yer hol' dem handles las' night?"

"I'll show you how long!" shouted the enraged farmer, lashing up his mules and trying to overtake Shorty's light-footed, fast-stepping team.

"Don't hurry yerself, cabbage stalks. 'Fraid I can't wait ter-day—bye-bye," said Shorty, putting his thumb to his nose and wriggling his fingers as his team sprang forward and left the countryman raving, shouting, and thrashing his sleepy-looking mules for satisfaction.

After a delightful ride, during which Shorty had several opportunities to try the speed and mettle of his team against others, and in most all of which he was fortunate enough to come out with flying colors, they returned to the hotel and sent the team around to the stable by one of the help.

As soon as he had finished his dinner, Shorty made inquiries in relation to the trunks containing their stage rigs, and learning that several of them were there he selected two, had them sent to his room, then giving Shanks and Dave Reed the wink, the three passed quietly up to Shorty's room and locked the door.

"Now, fellers, I want yer ter help me ter build a high rollin' rig of gal's clothes out of dem. Com', Dave, yer used ter do der gal business up ter der handle," said Shorty, unlocking the trunks and displaying everything from a king's diamond-studded crown to a pair of trunks.

"In the first place, Shorty, who's going to be the wench?" asked Dave.

"Dis ain't goin' ter be any of yer wenches; I want dis ter represent one of der 'ristocratic, snifty, gushin' belles of 'bout seventeen, wid a nice figger and lots of soap-colored hair, what dey call blondes," explained Shorty.

"Yes, but who are you going to get to take the part?" asked Reed.

"Myself."

"You?" asked Shanks.

"You?" echoed Dave.

"I'se der blonde."

"And you want us to help rig up so you'll pass muster?" said Dave, entering into the spirit of the joke.

"All right, Shorty, old boy; I'll tog you out the best I know how; but I don't know any more about women's fixin's than I do about what makes the black marks on the moon," said Shanks, so helplessly that Shorty and Dave Reed burst out in a roar of laughter.

"Hold on just where you are a minute till I come back. I've got a half-way idea where some harness is to be had," said Dave, slipping out of the room, and returning half an hour later with an armful of feminine toggery of the nattiest kind.

"There, now, we'll make as gushing a belle of you as ever flirted a handkerchief," remarked Dave, as he dumped his armful down and commenced selecting some undergarments for Shorty to try on.

Half an hour later Shorty was transformed into a bewitching little belle, with a wealth of golden hair flowing down her back, a superbly-rounded bust and a two-story bustle.

"There," said Dave, turning him round admiringly, and fixing a loop here and a ribbon there, "you're fixed, and I'll defy St. Louis to turn out a nobbier and tastier-dressed gal."

"Now I want yer ter cork my face till its blacker dan a crow's foot," said Shorty, trying to pull a pair of delicate lavender kids over his fat fingers.

"That won't take long," said Dave, as he gave a final glance at the outfit, and then set himself to corking Shorty's face, which, in a few minutes, he had two shades blacker than ebony.

"Dere, I'se the naughtiest, nobbiest, nicest little



Shorty with a loud "yah! yah!" tore away his veil, disclosing to the clerk the face of a black, grinning wench.

gal dat's out," said Shorty, as Dave Reed wound a long blue veil around his shoulders, after completely draping his face with it.

"Now, Shanks, yer've got ter hunt up der rest of der boys, an' tell dem dat dere's a high, rollin' racket comin' off, an' take dem, an' all der rest of der folks yer can scare up, inter der back parlors on der side entrance, an' lay mum till der fun begins," explained Shorty; then, as Shanks departed, he told Dave that he wanted him to first see him into the parlor, then bribe a darkey to hand the high-toned clerk a tiny, perfumed missive, and if questioned where he had obtained it, to answer from a young lady who was waiting in the parlor.

"Ah, a *billet doux* for me," murmured the clerk, as one of the waiters, hurrying through a few minutes later, handed him the tiny note.

"Sam?"
"Sah."
"Where did you receive this?"
"Young lady, sah, comin' in de side entrance, sah, gib it to me."

"All right," said the clerk, and tearing open the envelope, he read:

"DEAR SIR:—What will you think of my wild, mad determination to make your acquaintance, which I have long sought, but cold fate, relentless parents, and a cruel, unfeeling world have kept us apart. I have risked all to meet you, and am waiting your presence in the first parlor right of side entrance. Affectionately,

"MINNIE MONTAGUE."

The dandy clerk swallowed the bait like a gudgeon would a cracker, bounced around to a cracked looking-glass and slicked his locks down, curled the corners of his skeleton mustache, and calling to some employee to look after the desk, hastened through the corridors with a supercilious smile of conquest on his idiotic face.

Entering the room where Shorty was waiting, and which had been darkened to a faint, mysterious light, the clerk beheld the young, stylishly-dressed stranger, and approaching her, he struck an attitude, and said:

"Fairiest and sweetest of thy sex, a moment since thy fairy note summoning me to thy presence was received, and I have flown to thee on the footsteps of love."

"I too hav' counted the minits," whispered a voice under the heavy, muffled veil.

"Tell me, Minnie—for you will let me call you Minnie, won't you?—have you known me long?" he inquired, coming closer towards his idol.

"Oh, ever so long; but, yer see, ma always took me wid her in de carriage, an' pa used to make me study when he com' home from the bank," whispered the lady's voice.

"A carriage, father in a bank—maybe you haven't fallen on your feet," thought the clerk, coming to her side and taking her hand in his. "And all this time, Minnie, you never forgot me, and at last have made me the happiest of men by giving me this meeting."

"Oh, I—I—I'm so 'fraid we'll be—be—dis—dis—covered," stammered the girl.

"Have no fear, darling; you are with me, and I will love and protect you while I live," said the clerk, theatrically.

"But—but—I—I—I must g—go now."

"One boon, fairest empress of my heart and queen of my love ere you leave me; let me see your sweet, fair face, that I may carry its loving expression with me sleeping or waking till we meet again," he urged, and placing his arm around her waist, he drew her head down on his shoulders, when Shorty, with a loud "yah!—yah!" tore away his veil, disclosing to the astonished and thunderstruck clerk the face of a black, grinning wench. At the same moment Shanks turned the light in on the group, and shout after shout of laughter burst out from those who had been hidden spectators of the scene.

"Oh, Lord! that beats the Romeo and Juliet scene all to pieces," screamed one of the guests.

"He wanted one glance at her sweet, fair face, and he got it," laughed another.

"Call me Minnie," said Dave Reed.

Meanwhile the clerk had given one wild and frantic glare around till his eyes finally rested on Shorty's grinning mug. Then, with a sickly look about the gills and a weakness in his knees, he slunk out, followed by a shout of laughter that sent him up two stairs at a time to his room.

He came down the next morning and tried to brass it out; but they were too much for him. From the bell-boy to the proprietor all coddled him; and the dollar diamond, that evening, was replaced by a courteous gentleman who was not only a good fellow, but "knew how to run a hotel."

Shorty opened to a rattling old house.

The city had been well billed, and their coming extensively advertised; although stories of Shorty's rackets, which had preceded him, had done more good than all the advertising.

At all events, the St. Louis boys were determined that they would give them as warm a reception as they had experienced on their triumphant tour, and turned out nightly in such force that stretched

the seating capacity of the Olympic to the utmost, and filled the treasury with wealth.

Shorty's racket with the hotel clerk got wind, and the rush was greater than ever, especially as our hero had arranged an act entitled, "The Dollar Diamond; or, the Hotel Clerk's First and Only Love."

It was a gay old week the troupe spent in that city.

Every day some fresh pleasure was planned, and the St. Louis boys seemed to think no party complete without their New York friends were with them.

Shorty, you can bet, was not quiet. As soon as he saw that everything in the show line was in running order and the money coming in hand over fist, he struck out some fresh racket that would make the rest stand from under for awhile.

But seven days won't last forever, no matter how you try to stretch them, and the New York Minstrels found themselves packing up one bright, sunny morning for a ride over the St. Louis and South-eastern Railroad to Louisville, Kentucky, where they were expected, and which city was gorgeous in sunset posters announcing their coming.

After many a hand-shake and parting drink, our friend Shorty and his troupe were soon speeding towards the land of fast horses, blue grass, and good whisky.

"Boys," said Shorty, fixing himself comfortably in his seat and looking out at the last of the city they were leaving, "dat's a town where a feller could show up ter der evening of der bust up of der world, an' den get up resurrection mornin' feelin' dat dere was lots of places yer hadn't seed, an' lots of fun yer hadn't had, an' wind up by wishin' dey'd let yer go back dere for forty more shakes of a lam's tail."

"St. Louis may be red hot, but there's dead squads of places to beat it," said Shanks.

"Where's one?" demanded Tambo.

"Why, Louis-ville, of course."

"Somebody fan me wid a Dutch sausage," laughed Shorty, "for dat is a German joke."

"Bout time we heard from the other gang. I wonder what route they've struck this time?" said another.

"Well, judging from der way dey were in when I las' seed dem, I should say dey was certainly before us," answered Shorty, and the party laughed.

Thus joking, singing, laughing, and card playing, the boys passed their time pleasantly till the train stopped at Louisville.

CHAPTER XI.

You all will doubtless remember that we left Shorty, Shanks, and the New York Minstrels last week on their arrival at the Louisville depot.

On the arrival of the train, there was the usual spasm of life that marks Southern stations. Steam-whistles screamed, men with names printed on their hats ran hither and thither, and swore; baggage-smashers hurled iron-bound trunks down in shattered fragments; horses, frightened by the locomotive, backed themselves around in circles, to the disgust of their drivers; trucks with trunks, ran up and down the platform, spilling an unsuspecting traveler, who "wants to know" into an irritable old man, who immediately canes him, and a free fight seems imminent. When the whistle blows, the man who wanted to know springs aboard; and, ten minutes later, the depot is deserted, except by a blue-bottle fly on the window-pane and a half-clad, ten year old darkey, who was amusing himself dropping peanut shells down a knot-hole in the waiting-room floor.

"Dis is duller dan a grave-yard after der plantin' is ober an' der processhun's gone home," said Shorty, glancing slowly around.

"Where did you intend to hang out?" asked Shanks.

"Der Louisville Hotel on Main Street, only where der stage or conveyance dat's ter take us dere dat's what's crawlin' endways thro' my hair."

"What hotel did you say?" asked Tambo, who had been skirmishing around on his own hook.

"Der Louisville."

"Well, there's a team, and a stage marked 'Louisville Hotel,' and a nigger driver fast asleep outside here," said Tambo.

There was a general rush for the stage and the darkey was shook, pulled, mauled, yelled at, and jerked around in lively style.

"Foah de Lor' dis am a cl'ar case ob bull-dozin' bushwhackin'; yer all may's well clim' out dat stage foah dis nigger ain't gwine ter start a fut till de train comes in wid de minstrels on," said the old darkey, firmly, as he pulled out an old brass watch and consulted it.

"But the train's in half an hour ago, stupid, and all the passengers are gone," explained Dave Reed.

"Scuse me, gemmen bull-dozers, dis watch says dat tran'll be yeah in jess half an' hour, an' dis watch am der berry debbel foah keepin' time wid de rail cars," said the old man, shaking his head.

"The train's in and gone, confound your stupid head!" yelled the troupe.

"Dis watch, gemmen bull!"

"Hang the watch, go on with the stage," yelled Shanks.

"Start up dat team, uncle, or I'll make yer tink dat der day of jubilee hab come," said Shorty, and lowering the front window of the stage, he stuck a pin in the end of his cane and slipping it up unperceived, he jabbed the mule in the thigh with it.

"Ouw! bress de Lor'! I'se bit by a cotton-headed serpent, shuah!" roared the old man, springing up, taking off his suspenders, and pulling down his overalls to see where he had been stung.

He had just got quieted down, and was referring to the brass watch again, when Shorty spurred him up once more.

"Clar ter de mitey goodness, dere's dat 'fernal cotton-head back 'gin!" he yelled, springing up in such haste that he dropped the watch from the top of the stage to the ground.

One of the boys got out and tossed it up to him, but it was in a badly demoralized condition, and persisted in running around the whole twenty-four hours every two minutes.

"I'se 'off now, gemmen bulldozers, foah I want ter consult wid some pussen dat unferstan's de prescribin' for a watch dat acts like it was gwine to run de nex' billyun yeas in ha-an-hour."

Every few yards between the depot and the hotel, Shorty would slyly give the old darkey a prod, and the wild yells, eccentric actions, and comical capers of the old fellow attracted the attention of everybody along the streets through which they passed.

Driving up to the front of the hotel, the old man flung down the reins, climbed off the box, and, hauling off his battered straw hat, approached his boss, the proprietor, and said:

"Is de train in, boss?"

"Yes. What kept you?"

"Did der train 'peah to be anywhar 'bout de usual time ob day?" asked the old man.

"Yes, it was on time."

"Den, boss, I'se gwine rite down town an' call a board ter 'vestigate dis watch's purreedins in dis 'fair."

"The next time you're late back from the depot you won't escape so easy," warned the proprietor.

"One minit, boss. Yer don't tink dat any of dem gemmen is spirittoof mediums, do yeah?"

Being assured on that point, the old fellow put on his torn straw hat, shook his head wisely, put the brass watch to his ear and started down the street, singing a fragment of some old plantation ditty.

"An old and privileged servant, been with me since he was a child, honest and faithful," laughed the host, in explanation, as he led the way into the hotel and called waiters to show them to their apartments.

Shorty and Shanks were more than pleased with

their large, commodious apartments, opening upon the main street, and having brushed the dust and stains of travel from their persons, hauled up their chairs to the bay-windows, which opened to the floor, and enjoyed a quiet, sociable smoke and chat.

"Any idea of the show-house?" asked Shanks.

"Not der faintest. It's der biggest lay-out in der city, an' I guess it's all hunky dory," said Shorty, calmly.

There was a good, comfortably-filled house gathered to welcome the New York Minstrels that evening. The loud and enthusiastic recommendations and press notices from their St. Louis friends had awakened a desire amongst the Louisville boys to see them, and a nicely-filled house was the result.

Everything passed off lovely; the songs, dialogues, and acts, were all new and fresh out there, and the audience applauded them several times, Shorty making a favorite of himself from the moment he showed his nose before the curtain.

"Well, that'll do for an opening night," said Shanks, as they walked home from the theater after the performance.

"Dere ort ter hav' been two hundred dollars more in der house; dey wants som' 'citement ter start dem up here, an' we've just got ter keep our eyes peeled for somethin' dat's goin' ter get dem all up an' buzzin' round like a hive of bees," answered Shorty.

"An' who's going to stir them?"

"We are, jess as soon as der chance turns up, you bet."

"But, from what I hear, this ain't a good show-town, anyhow," said Shanks.

"Oh, dat be banged for a yarn; dere ortn't ter be, an' musn't be, anythin' but good show-towns for der New York Minstrels. Dat may do for some of dese snide, hamfatin' gangs ter giv' away, but wid a crowd like we run, der town billed till it looks lik' a patchwork quilt, dere ort to, an's got ter be a jam every night," answered Shorty, and a little while after their return to the hotel they retired.

Our hero and Shanks were up bright and early next morning, knocking around the nicely-shaded and well-paved streets before the sun got too warm, returning to the hotel in time for a red-hot breakfast, which they sat down to with appetites that enabled them to do it justice.

They were enjoying a smoke on the veranda, and planning a trip to the falls, when a tall, sun-burned, good-looking young fellow joined them, and, after a moment, introduced himself as Thomas Jennings, captain of Our Boys Base Ball Nine of Louisville.

"And seeing you looked like a fun-loving, free-and-easy party, I made bold to run over and invite you to attend a match—Kentucky against New York. The fact, indeed, of your being from New York being sufficient guarantee of your being ball-tossers," said the young fellow, in a frank, hearty voice that prepossessed them in his favor at once, besides here was the very opportunity Shorty had been praying for.

"I'm squar up an' down glad ter meet yer in der first place, an' I'sure yer dat der Our Boys Club of Louisville has made itself a name dat's heard pretty often in der Norf. Der New York Minstrels cheerfully 'cept your challenge, an' we'll play our level best ter keep ole New York's end up in der struggle," answered Shorty.

"Bully for you. I s'pose you're going to captain your nine?" asked their visitor.

"Yes, I guess dat I'll boss der gang."

"About how soon could I expect your nine to be ready? Of course you will require some time to prepare in," asked the young captain.

"Ter-morrer at two," replied Shorty, promptly.

"To-morrow at two?" inquired Shanks, who had kept silence so far.

"To-morrow at two?" asked the young captain.

"Dat's der day an' hour," laughed our hero.

"Why that is so much earlier a date than I even dared to expect, and I can but thank you again for the heartiness with which you have entered into the subject."

"Dat's dis hair-pin's style. I'm either all on der bile, get up an' prance 'round kind of clam, or I'm stun' cold an' not worth shucks; but one thing certain, we'll be on hand ter-morrer on time, 'thout som'thin' extraordinary turns up, an' if it does, we'll turn it down agin an' be ther anyhow. Now, less go in an' moisten our clay wid a sherry-cobbler," said Shorty, leading the way into the hotel, where they were soon sucking straws, in a state of coolness and comfort.

A few minutes later, the young representative of the "Our Boys," of Louisville, took his departure.

"Shorts, old chum, I reckon that I kept my jaws padlocked about as close as if it was hermetically sealed, while yer was chinnin' with that ball-tosser; but now that he's lit out, lem'me ask you where in thunder are you going to get a base-ball club in playing trim by to-morrow?" asked Shanks, excitedly.

"Don't yer fret, Shanks. Go an' tell der fellers I want ter see dem out on der veranda."

The troupe were all in for the match as soon as Shorty informed them, and our little friend found no trouble in selecting eight players, some of whom had belonged at different times to the crack clubs of this country.

"Der nex' thing's 'bout a uniform, somethin'

nobby, an' dat will be ready ter-morrer when der clock strikes noon. Le's go an' scoop in some of der big shops," said Shorty, leading the way down the main street and calling at each place of importance.

"You want the nine suits made of the best goods and according to that design, and to have them finished and delivered at the hotel by noon to-morrow?" asked a tailor, occupying a store on the opposite side of the street from the hotel.

"Zactly. Now, der question is, can yer jerk 'em through on time?"

"Extra work like this always commands extra prices," hemmed the knight of the shears.

"Hang der prices! Ef yer can rig der crowd out in slam-bang style, an' on time, I won't squeal when I pay der bill if 'tain't longer dan yer yardsstick," said Shorty.

"That settles it; you shall have them on time, and made in style. Step this way for to leave your measures now," replied the tailor, flying around like a hen with a brood of chickens.

Leaving the tailor's, Shorty and his friend Shanks paid a flying visit to the offices of the Louisville Journal and Democrat, and had them insert half a dozen prominent notices of the coming game. The job offices were put to work on posters, to be ready for the bill-stickers that night, announcing the great championship match.

"Come, fellers," said Shorty, that afternoon, "let us walk out a ways an' have a little practice game 'mongst ourselves, for I don't propose ter let dat Our Boys Club have such a soft snap on us as lots of fellers seem ter think dey will."

They succeeded in finding a good ground after a short walk, stepped off their ground, and in half an hour Shorty found that he had a nine that needn't take a back seat to anything that came along.

"Dat'll do for dis time, now for supper an' der show, an' ter-morrer mornin' I want ter see all dis playin' crowd up an' ready ter pass der ball by five in der mornin' sharp," remarked our little friend, as he paddled back to the hotel and examined some blisters in the palm of his hand.

There was a much larger house this evening than on the one previous; all the seats were occupied by a friendly crowd, who laughed at all their gags, applauded all their points, and cheered their hits to the echo; everything worked smoothly and nice, and a new song on base-ball by Shorty brought down the house, and sent that young gentleman off home in a good humor.

The practice game next morning gave the New Yorkers more confidence in themselves and each other, and they found they could pass a ball and make a double play just or nearly as fast as in their old ball-playing days.

"Now, yer can loaf around, but be at der hotel at noon. I'm goin' ter get der boss at der hotel ter hire me his stage an' four nags; dat won't be slow, I reckon," said Shorty, and the boys made a general break for the hotel and breakfast.

The uniforms arrived on time, and the boys just looked nobby in them.

They were of white flannel, bound with a scarlet cord, and the letters N. Y. M. worked on their breastplates, white cap with a scarlet cord and button, white and scarlet belts, and scarlet stockings.

Punctual to the minute the stage, gayly decorated with flags, and containing the New York Nine, dashed up to the Louisville ball grounds, where they were welcomed by Our Boys club; and a clapping of hands and waving of handkerchiefs from a large audience, amongst which were many ladies, who had gathered to see the match.

After the selection of an umpire, the two captains tossed for choice of innings, and Shorty winning, the New Yorkers were sent to the positions in the field with a few whispered instructions, Shorty having decided to play short-stop.

"Oh, look what a funny-looking player!" exclaimed a voice, as the nine separated, and Shorty was seen waddling down to his post as fast as his little duck legs would carry him.

Play was called a moment later, and the game commenced under considerable excitement, the ladies waging gloves and perfumery, and the gentlemen betting wine and cigars on its issue.

Our Boys' first striker batted a high ball, which was gobbled by the left field and passed back in style. Batsman number two got his first on a daisy-cutter, and was trying to steal his second, when he was captured by a magnificent throw to second by Shanks, who was catching. Number three batted a ball in Shorty's direction, who picked it up and put it to first base in time to wind up the inning.

It was now the New Yorkers' turn at the bat, and Dave Reed led off by a first-base hit. Tambo followed with a corker to center field that gave him his first and let Dave around to his second. Shanks took the stick and managed to drop the ball in a spot where it was safe till his long legs could carry him to first base. Things commenced to look a little exciting about this time, three men on bases and the chances of a double play looming up.

"Who's the next striker?"

"Whose turn is it next?"

"Everything depends on a good batter now."

"Pshaw! it's that little runt," remarked the crowd, impatiently.

"Then that cooks their goose. They did have some show 'fore this," said a man, as Shorty, after



Shorty, with the fragments of a broken bat-handle in his hand, was digging it around the bases like a little terrier.

carefully selecting a bat, stepped forward, tossed down his cap, glanced confidently around and toed the plate.

"I'll bet any of you folks all you want to, that that little rooster is the game bird in the field. Why, there's more pluck, push and confidence in his comical old face than there is in a dozen of the others," exclaimed an old gray-haired man, jumping up and hauling out a well-filled pocket-book.

Shorty, in the meantime, stood quietly and coolly waiting for a ball to suit him. It came at last, and slowly raising his bat as it came toward him, he swung his body to meet it, throwing at the same time all the strength and power of his muscular little body in the stroke, and the next moment that ball was soaring high over the heads of the fielders, while Shorty, with the fragments of a broken bat-handle in his hand, was digging it around the bases like a little terrier, not stopping till he had put the climax on it by making a home run amidst such thunders of applause from the audience, that he got up from where he had thrown himself on the grass and bowed his acknowledgment.

"By George! Shorty, that was an awful crack you hit that ball; why they say there never was a ball batted around here within fifty feet of yours," said Shanks.

"Well, yer see, I tumbled ter der crowd actin' sick when dey seen dat dey had a small feller ter pull yer out of der hole yer was in, an' I jess made up my mind ter soak dat ball, wid all der ugliness an' strength in dis carcass—yer savey?" explained Shorty, getting up to give some directions.

The game was a closely contested one, both clubs batting and fielding magnificently, and keeping the scores down to almost nothing: till at the end of the ninth inning the score stood, New York, 5. OUR BOYS 4.

"Three cheers for the New York boys and their little home run captain," proposed some one in the crowd, and they were given with a will.

"An' now, fellers, I want yer ter giv' three times three an' an ol' New York tiger for der OUR BOYS Club," exclaimed Shorty, climbing up on top of the stage and waving his hat.

The score was at once sent to OUR BOYS Publishing Company and appears in Number 75 of OUR BOYS.

That night, and every night in fact during the balance of their stay was the theater crowded long before the time of commencing, and hundreds were turned away from the doors for want of room. On the evening of the ball match the lower private boxes were occupied by the OUR BOYS Club.

Every act was cheered to the echo, and when the

audience could recognize some favorite player of the afternoon under his burnt cork mask, the shouts and applause would be deafening, and he was safe to be called out again.

Shorty's figure gave him away before he had got his nose past the flies, and then such a cheering, shouting, applauding, yelling, and noise making never has been heard before or since in that quiet old city of Louisville.

It was an ovation, and the crowd who were so ready to jeer and hiss him, had he made a muf, now rose and cheered him till they were hoarse.

"Speech! Speech! Speech! S-p-e-e-c-h!" yelled the crowd from every part of the house, till Shorty, finding that there was no chance of his proceeding with his banjo solo, laid down the banjo tenderly, scratched his head, and, advancing a step, said:

"Dere wite folkses. Ise as grateful for dis ovashun as a schoolboy for a second chunk of mince pie. We com' ter dis town strangers, even ter der police, an' yer hav' taken us by der flippers, led us out inter green pastures, an' nearly kerwalloped us out of our boots in a game dat, if we'd lost, why we'd hav' had ter wear vails over our purty faces so yer couldn't see us blush. Now if you'll jess keep so quiet dat yer can hear yer ha'r grow, I'll pick yer a few red hot gushes on my little banjo."

Shorty's speech was received with a storm of applause, after which he went on with and finished his act. Altogether the show was voted a big thing, and when the curtain finally dropped the crowd were enthusiastic over their night's pleasure.

The New York Minstrels had a gay time during the rest of their stay in Louisville. Invitations to picnics, excursions, and pleasure parties fluttered in upon them by the score. Then there was horse-back rides and boat races, horse races, shooting matches and hunting parties without number, till any stranger, who could have dropped in and seen the long faces of the crowd, as they packed their luggage the morning of their departure, would have thought he had fallen amongst a delegation of undertakers.

The hotel stage, driven by the old darkey with the damaged watch, whisked them down to the depot in time to catch the Jefferson, Madison and Indianapolis train. There were quite a crowd down to see them off, OUR BOYS Club figuring amongst the others, and three hearty cheers were given for the New York Minstrels as the cars rolled out of the depot.

"Say fellers, in der nex' car ahead dere's lots of seats an' we can all be tergether. I'll hav' der conductor telegraf' head an' fix us all hunk on der

snoozin' car biz; dey don't run dese roads down 'ere same as yer was on der Erie or der Pennsilvany Centr'l," said Shorty, leading the way into the car he had spoken of, which they found only occupied by a few people, having evidently been attached at Louisville.

Having all got themselves comfortably fixed for their ride, they fell to chinning and cooing each other over things that had passed. Meantime our friend Shorty had tumbled to a tall, powerfully-built, farmerish looking old man, who sat a few seats in front of him and who kept telling his wife every third minute:

"I tell you, old woman, I've got to have some one fetch me a drink of water right smart, or I'll dry clean up."

"Do sit still, John," replied his matrimonial helpmate.

Looking over he saw Shorty, and leaning towards him he asked:

"Say little fellow, how can a man that's dry clean through get a drink fetched him? I'm most puckered out for a drink."

"Did yer ring for der waiter?" asked Shorty, pointing to the bell-rope that ran through the top of the cars.

"Well, I'll be dogoned if that ain't soft in me not to know that 'fore," said the old man, reaching up and giving the bell-rope a rattling old pull.

The whistle screamed, the brakemen flew to the brakes, and the train came to a quick stop; then the engineer and conductor were heard in an animated discussion, and finally the latter, a small, snappish little fellow, darted into the car and yelled loud enough to make the windows rattle:

"I'd like to know who in thunder?"

"Are you the waiter man? For if you are, please fetch me a drink of water. I'm almost played out for a sup," interrupted the old man, catching him by the coat-tails and pulling him back.

"Waiter be hanged! I'm the conductor. Leggo my coat-tails, old man, till I find out who done that," said the conductor, making the signal to go on, and passing into another car, while Shorty and Shanks covered their faces with some picture papers and roared.

They rode along in silence for the next fifteen minutes, when the old man, getting restless, again remarked:

"I reckon that that waiter feller didn't hear that bell; mebbe the noise kept him so. I sorter think I'll ring agin, 'cause I'm all parched in my stummick," and, suiting the action to the words, he gave the bell-rope a rousing old pull, and about that time Shorty and Shanks started forward into

the smoking-car, encountering a furious and murderously-disposed little conductor tearing through the cars, which were being rapidly brought to a halt.

"Great Mahomet! who rang that bell?" he yelled, bounding into the car, glaring around and slamming the door.

"Where's that waiter?" asked the old man.

"Devil take the waiter!"

"Not till he fetches me some water, fer I'm so plumb dry I can't spit."

"Who rang that bell?"

"What bell be you makin' so much fuss 'bout?"

"Why, that engine bell up there."

"Why, that little snoozer told me that bell was to fetch a waiter with water. Where is he, by hokey?"

But Shorty was absent about that time, and the conductor, after raving, frothing and threatening everybody, started the train once more, sent the train boy with some water, and peace was once more restored. After a long and dusty ride they rattled into Chicago, where they were billed to appear at Hooley's.

CHAPTER XII.

"CHICAGO, at last, fellers. Now, shake der dust off yer eyebrows, slant yer toothpicks ter der left, an' tussle yer traps tergether in less time dan it takes ter manufacture a four-legged fly," laughed Shorty, and he was skipping through the cars when a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice said:

"S'pose you stop a minit an' hev a talk with the old man you was so smart foolin' last night?"

"What's der matter wid yer bilyus system, ol' tater bugs?" asked Shorty, glancing around and seeing he was in the clutches of the old farmer, whom he had directed to pull the bell-rope.

"I'll tater bug that frog-legged little body of yours or it."

"Did yer pull it?"

"Yes, I did pull it twice."

"An' didn't nary waiter skip in?"

"Waiter? No. I stopped the train, and a little man come in, called me a pickpocket, and was going to put me off, and the old lady too, all 'count of your dirty story-telling, you good-for-nothing runt you."

"Try it now, ol' squash vines. I'll bet yer der beer dat he'll com'," said Shorty, figuring around to get his collar out of the old man's iron grip.

"Fool me again, would you? I'll ring your ear instead, young smartbox!" and he was trying to catch Shorty by the ear; but that youth suddenly dove his head, stooped his shoulders, and run full force between the farmer's legs, upsetting him in between the seats, the most astonished and worst nose-skinned personage around that depot, while Shorty dodged away.

"Who provides our hash while we're here?" asked Shanks, as they straggled out of the cars one by one in a state of dust, bundles and good-for-nothingness, such as a fellow always feels in after a long car ride.

"Der Sherman Hotel's our nest, boys," said Shorty, and he was moving slowly away from the cars, when an excited voice exclaimed:

"Stop that short-legged thing there! Stop him, somebody, till I get out!"

"Your old friend from the rural regions don't appear to fraternize with you, Shorty, for a cent," said Shanks, laughingly.

"Not much; we don't suck 'lasses thro' der one straw, or go halves on der peanut lay," replied Shorty.

The next minute the old fellow, loaded with a pair of cotton umbrellas, like traveling circus tents, a band-box and a hat-box, a couple of shawls, a cloak, an overcoat, a basket of provisions, and a bunch of dried herbs from the farm, appeared upon the platform, and, catching sight of his diminutive enemy, he made a dash at him, just as one of the porters, hastening along with a hand-truck of baggage, came behind, lifted his feet from under him and spilled him in a tangled heap of herbs, profanity, bursted band-boxes and women's screams, broken umbrellas and bruises, in the midst of which Shorty and his party walked quietly off, our little friend throwing a few kisses at the aged agriculturist, which, strange to say, did not appear to be appreciated.

"Stages and carriages for the Sherman House," said a runner, and a few minutes later the New Yorkers were being driven to that magnificent Western hotel.

"Seems like gettin' a smell of ol' New York ter get round 'ere where dere's some snap an' crack an' bizness 'bout dem. Dese Soudern cities is all good 'nuff, but dey ain't got der everlastin' slam round dat dere is yere," observed Shorty, leaning back in a corner and looking out at the well filled and moving crowds of people on the streets.

"That's what's the matter in a nutshell, Shorty," said Shanks.

On their arrival at the hotel they found that nice, comfortable rooms had been reserved for them, and Shorty and Shanks, having selected a suite together, looked themselves in and engaged in a brushing and scouring crusade against the dust from their journey.

"Dere 'pears ter be more dust dan dere is me," laughed Shorty, as he emerged from a basin.

"And I'm so long that I catch twice as much as anybody else. Sometimes I'm 'fraid they'll arrest me for trying to carry part of one State into another," joked Shanks, as he mopped his ears out.

"All yer'd hab ter do would be ter reinstate it." "Dust to dust; carry me out and bury me decently, after that joke."

"Don't talk 'bout berries, when yer can get 'em for ten cents a quart."

"Cheese it, or I'll cry for quarter."

"I'll gib yer one; yer needn't cry for it."

"I'm afraid this Chicago air must have taken effect upon your mental perceptions," said Shanks.

"Pon my what?"

"Your intellectual abilities."

"Wind 'em up like a watch?"

"I'll call a cop and have him wind you up with a club, you lunatic you."

"Den I'd be a club 'stead of a stem-winder."

"You'll be wanting the services of some undertaker if you keep on getting off those rash jokes."

"I'll undertaker ter get 'em off 'thout any stiff juggler's assistance," said Shorty.

"Cork up, or I'll muzzle you and lock you up in that big trunk you're rooting in. Why, it would make a bully house for you," laughed Shanks.

"I ain't like der elephant an' am willin' ter leave my trunk behind me, but I'll tell yer one thing, Shanks, an' dat ain't two, I think I see a chance for a quiet little racket dis afternoon," said Shorty, brightening up like a fresh coined silver dollar.

"That suits me like a hollow log does a coon. But how in thunder did you tumble to anything here, I don't see," replied Shanks.

"Oh, if dere's any show for ter hav' any fun layin' loose 'round dese or any other corners, an' Shorty ain't fly 'nuff ter drop ter it an' scoop it in on der half shell, den yer git me a job in a shoe-peg shop, or learnin' eels ter swim 'thout riggin' dere tail."

"I believe you smell it out like a fly does a sugar barrel, or a crow does a dead horse."

"Dat's be *cave* I keeps my eyes an ears glued open," coddled Shorty, and the dinner hour drawing near, they started down stairs.

"Yer 'member what I tol' yer 'bout a racket 'fore dinner, don't yer?" asked Shorty, as they were standing on the stoop smoking their cigars after dinner.

"Yes, you bet," replied Shanks.

"Com' 'long then an' let's slide up ter our rooms an' I'll dix things in no time," continued our little hero, and paddling into the room he commenced lifting things out of the big trunk until it was nearly empty.

"Now how's dat for a Saratoga mansion. If ther baggage smashers didn't get dere 'destroyin' mud hooks on ter it?" asked Shorty, jumping into it and letting down the lid.

"I think the best thing I can do is to express you off to Old Scratch while I've got you so comfortable."

"Yes, dat'll do. Now I want a couple more holes for air in dere sides. I can fix dat wid my knife in no time."

"Now, what you want me to do?" asked Shanks.

"All yer got ter do is ter climb inter der nex' room, lock der door an' listen ter an' enjoy der fun dat's in here, yer can hear ebery word," said Shorty, and Shanks having shut himself up in the other room, Shorty rang the bell connecting with the office, and a few moments later a waiter was heard shuffling along the passage, winding up by knocking at the door.

"Who's dat?" asked Shorty, holding the trunk lid a few inches open, and besides he wanted the waiter to hear his voice in the room.

"It's de waitah, sah."

"Oh, all rite; com' in quick!" exclaimed Shorty, letting the lid down softly, and a second later the darkey opened the door, stepped in, looked around, scratched his wool, went out and looked at the number on the door again, came back and moved around the room cautiously; then, as he started for the door, he said:

"Dat ends it; bress der Lord, I'se gwine ter lead a more 'ligious life dan I'se been a doin'; dis is a warnin', shuah. Talk 'bout yer spiritoolers, dey can't be a sarcumstance side of dis 'Com' in quick.' Clem Johnsing, dis is a lesson, an' yer better pay som' 'tention ter dis miricul."

Then the old fellow went out, closing the door very carefully behind him, and Shorty and Shanks emerged from their hiding-places and enjoyed a hearty laugh at the old darkey's sudden reformation.

"Now dig back ter yer hole an' I'll crawl inter my nest agin'," said Shorty, after he had stretched his legs, giving the bell another pull and quietly resuming his loafing position in the trunk, leaving the lid partly open.

Presently footsteps, mysterious footsteps, no longer shuffling and careless, came along the passageway.

"Is dat der waiter, agin?"

"Yes, s-a-h."

"Why do yer come?"

"Y-y-o-u r-r-a-n-n-g, s-s-a-h."

"I ring, ha! ha! Enter," laughed Shorty, most sardonically, letting the lid down quietly, and a moment after the door was opened and Mr. Clem Johnsing entered with trembling knees, and again the room was looked over, the closets and wardrobes, and even up the chimney and out of the window examined into.

"I know'd 't was wuss den butterfly foolishness comin' back ter dis 'partment; if dey wants ter reach an' wait on dis flyin' ghost, dey've got ter build a balloon an' go sailin' 'round thro' de air ter meet 'im. I'd like ter know what he was 'ha! ha! 'bout; I guess he ain't much 'quainted wid dis hotel or de spirit 'd know dat when he jings der bell dis dark's got ter scramble," mused the old man. "I don't pertickuler keer for waitin' an' 'ten-tin on dis spiritool ghost, tho' he don't 'pear ter be a heavy eater or

drinker, but the 'sociation is not hardly de cheese dat I've been in de habit ob movin' in," and he shook his head sorrowfully, went out on his tiptoes and streaked it down the stairs.

He was seated explaining the mysterious case to another old nig, who was drinking it in with open eyes, ears and mouth, when the bell rang out again.

"Thirty-four! Johnsing, thirty-four again. This is the third time he's rung; see what he wishes at once!" called off one of the proprietors, who happened to be behind the office desk.

"Please, sah, I don't hardly think de gemmen wishes for anythin' from dis world. 'Cause as how he's a ghost," exclaimed Johnson.

"Ghost! don't wish anything! I'm 'fraid you've been drinking, Johnsing," said his boss, looking up laughingly. "Here, Julius, you go up along with Johnsing, an' see if you can find what they want up there."

Julius, who was a light-colored, middle aged nig, went jumping up two stairs at a time, till the old man fetched him up with:

"Is yer 'pared ter meet folks from oder worl's?"

"Oder whaz?" asked the corn-colored nig, halting suddenly.

"Oh, notink only; when yez shakin' han's wid a ghos' an' bowin' ter a spirit, mebbe yer won't be so peart an' hurry-like," said the old man, solemnly and impressively.

"Why, has de gemmen in thirty-foah a 'quaintance wid—wid ghosts?"

"Shoh, don't yer know dere ain't any gemmen in thirty-foah?" explained the old man.

"What is we goin' up dere foah?"

"Ter converse wid de spirits an' go back agin."

"Shuah."

"Well, yeah we be 'any way. I s'pose I'll knock," said the old man, and he tapped gently, while the young corn-colored fellow got a shade lighter and hung back, keeping hold of the old man's coat-tail.

"Is dat nigger back yere agin?" demanded Shorty.

"Dey m-made m-me, s-sah, co-com' u-up, sah, when y-you r-ring," stammered Clem.

"Thort ver said dere wasn't no one in de room," remarked corn color, getting reassured at hearing a human voice in the room.

"Shut up, nig, dat aint noffin mortal dat's speakin'."

"Death! dust! ashes! winding sheets! blood! gore! coffins an' graveyards, are more in my line! Enter, nigs," groaned Shorty, shutting himself up in the trunk, while the two nigs, with trembling knees, distended eyes, hearts in their mouths, went around the room holding on to each other for comfort, and encouraging each other with "you go first."

"Dere, Julius, wid all der sirkumstandshull evidence dat you've seed an' heard don't yer sort feel that ver'd been holdin' de plow-handles 'long wid som' spiritools?" asked the old man, as they finally started for the door.

"I don't wanta talk yet till I get my heart an' bref all rite agin' for I will 'low, brudder Clem, dat dat voice did kinder frustrate dis pusson so dat for a minit I was sorter 'fraid, but de courage in my buzzum 'lone kep me up. Dey can ring thirty-four till dese tired, but dey ain't goin' to get dis nig up dere any moah. Dat convassashun 'bout blood an' coffins an' graves, ain't jess what dis chile keers 'bout lis'nin' ter," answered the corn-colored darkey, ponderously, and they started back to the office, while Shorty and Shanks came out and laughed till they were tired over the fright of the darkeys, and the success of the racket.

"Now lile yer imported cabbage cheroot, stretch yerself round loose an' careless like, an' I'll ring agin'," said Shorty.

It was a long time before the bell was answered, but at last there came a timid knock.

"Well, why in thunder don't you come in?" called out Shanks, Shorty not wishing his voice to be heard, although he had disguised it in speaking from the trunk.

"Dere it is 'gain, 'nother invitashun ter der bone-yard recep— Gol A'mighty! Bress de lan'!" exclaimed the old man, on coming into the room and finding Shorty and Shanks sitting quietly smoking.

"Well, what appears to be the matter here? I have had to ring four times without an answer, and the first waiter that does come looks as if I'd scared him out of six months' growth," said Shanks, sternly.

"He's 'live, shuah," mumbled Clem.

"You'll find I'm very much alive if I ain't waited on better than this."

"Youse rang foah times, sah?"

"Four times."

"An' dere was no one come up, sah?"

"You're the first I've seen."

Clem scratched his head, rubbed his eyes, shuffled his feet uneasily, and kept feeling of himself with his hands. A happy thought flashed across him, and opening the door, he looked long and fixedly at 34, then closing it, he said:

"Gemmen, dere's a great deal ob der resurecshun day's bizness gwine on ter-day, ter my sartin knowledge, but I'se ready ter wait on yer, seeln' yer humans."

Having dispatched him with some trifling errand, Shorty and Shanks pulled out for a look at the theater and a cruise around the city before evening.

They found everything hypercoo at Hooley's, and were very much pleased with the appearance and size of the building, the stage and seating capacity, and the general manner in which everything had been attempted to and carried out.



"Death! winding sheets! blood! coffins an' graveyards," groaned Shorty, while the two nigs howled with terror.

"If we can manage to jam dis house for der nex' two weeks, I'se satisfied, an' yer can go right out an' pawn yer boots that 'tain't goin' ter be any slouch of a gang dat's goin' ter get up an' do it, wid all dem oder op'ry an' high-toned biz a runnin' at der same time. I'se goin' ter gib dem a new bill eb'ry night. Der gang has got ter tie demselves loose from der eyebrows down, an' act for a squar' hundred chips on der dollar, an' if der Chicago boys wants ter see a high-rollin', heavy-weather show, 'ere's where they've got ter bile inter," explained Shorty, as they left the building.

"Well, which way now?"

"Ain't a bit more pertickuler dan dat man in front of us dat's skatin' off inter der gutter," said Shorty, pointing to an elderly and fat gentleman, who had unfortunately stepped upon a banana skin, and the next minute was darting with lightning force and sickening sensations towards the gutter, clutching madly at vacancy to hold himself up, and eventually sitting down on the hardest and edgiest stone within a mile, with a force that drives it some inches further into the ground than the street pavers have been able to get it; this fact the fat man hardly seemed to feel interested in, his time and attention being taken up in feeling if his scalp was really off or the joints in his backbone loose, while he sprinkled profanity around that locality in a manner that threatened to depopulate it.

"Dropped somfin, didn't yer?" asked Shorty, laughingly, on coming up to the bruised, excited and profane old fellow.

"None of your darned business! Dropped something! Great sacrificed Moses! When a man falls and breaks himself all to atoms, then to have some grinning idiot come along and ask you if you've dropped anything!" he growled, getting on his feet slowly and groping around after half a dozen parcels he had dropped. He was picking up the last bundle, when a newsboy with an armful of extras struck him fair behind, and the next minute he had skinned the bridge of his nose and was sitting on the curbstone calling upon heaven to witness how he was persecuted.

"Put der shutters up on that tater trap of yourn, an' don't make a howlin' ole Bashi Bayouk of yerself cause yer happen to kiss der sidewalk wid der place dat yer use ter sit down on. Der best thing for yer ter do is ter climb up on yer knees, sing a little hymn, snatch yer traps together; pass a tract or two on swearin' aroun', an' den bow to der audience an' sneak off home," advised Shorty, coddlingly.

Then the fat and furious old gent arose, and swore

three-story oaths at people who couldn't mind their own business, while he snatched up his bundles.

"There's some duck-legged idiots—Suffering, suspended Mahomet! what's that?" he exclaimed, as a rotten orange took him fair and square in the ear, splattering him all over, while a loud boyish yell of exultation came from around the corner, and to which point the fat man directed his flying footsteps.

Hooley's Theater was well filled when the curtain rose on the first performance of the New York Minstrels. Their coming had been well heralded by the press of the city, the show had been billed and advertised up to the handle, but the best card in the deck to draw was Shorty, whose rackets in all the other cities had been laughed at by the boys of Chicago, and who were anxious to catch a glimpse of the little joker.

Everything worked like a charm; the troupe never appeared to a better advantage, and received rounds of well-earned applause. Shorty, of course, received an enthusiastic reception, and was loudly and heartily cheered by the down stairs part of the house, while the "gods" in the gallery fairly made it howl, and bombarded him with questions in regard to his former rackets.

"How's dat snoozer yer fought der duel wid?" yelled one.

"He's wearin' ice earlings ter keep 'is hed cool an' com' out all hunk," answered Shorty, laughing up at his youthful questioner.

"Dat oder nigger show didn't send ter yer for any more bumblebees, did dey?" chirped another.

"Nary postal card 'bout bees; so I guess dey're supplied."

"Der Our Boys Club want yer ter come back an' knock dat ball ober agin."

"Dey thort we was fresh," chuckled Shorty, winking his eye to the young arabs, with whom he was always a prime favorite, and who howled their delight now in their own peculiar manner.

"How 'bout dat han'-organ racket?"

"Dey played so long an' so hard dat dey loosened der bricks in der chimneys, an' der back teeth in der heads of der people in der hotel, den dey took 'em out inter a lot an' lenced 'em roun' so dey couldn't get out, an' sot 'em ter playin' 'gin one 'nuther; dey played der nails out of der fences, an' der advertisements off der signs roun' der corner; but dey kept on, an' finally, jess as dey was playin' 'Way Down on der Swanee Riber,' one of der organs busted, 'nuder one went up on 'Mother, I've Cum Hom' ter Die.' Dey sent der corpus of der grinders roun' ter a sassage mill, an' der rest groun' way 'Pat Malloy, killed a big feller, an' bust his organ inter flinders;

altergether it was a purty sight, an', boys, I'm sorry yer wasn't dere lookin' at it. Der last ole masheen turned inside out yesterday when dey tried ter make it play 'Captain Jinks of der Horse Marines,' an' dere eatin' der las' of der saggies in Detroit now dat was made from dat was made from dat tough ole grimder," said Shorty, so comically that the boys yelled till the roof of the theater seemed in danger of coming off.

"Good heavens, Shorty, what were you feeding the boys on to-night?" asked Shanks, as they left the theater that night, at the close of the performance.

"Oh, a little wind puddin' dat's all. Der boys an' me allus stick as tight tergether as two gumdrops. Som' of dese frilly, high-toned fakirs dey plays, an' looks an' fixes demselves so's ter get der boxes an' parquette ter wave der blow rags at dem, but jess as soon as I strike der footlights I takes a squint up at der boys in der gallery an' 'd suit dem, dese front row folks can keep der wipes in der pockets if dey don't want to wave dem," replied Shorty, striking match on the leg of his pants and lighting a cigar.

"And that's where your head's level and you strike the nail square on the top every clip, little fellow," answered Shanks, laughing.

"Dat's jess where I aims for."

"Early to go back to the hotel, ain't it?"

"I don't feel snoozy," said Shorty.

"How're you on the shoot?" asked Shanks, pointing to a lit-up target gallery on the other side of the street.

"Well, I can hit der side of a barn, but I ain't so good shootin' 'round corners. D'yer want ter try yer luck?" asked our little friend, leading the way across to the gallery.

Having selected a target, Shanks led off with several good shots, Shorty followed, and letting the muzzle of the gun drop slowly till he covered the center, he pulled the trigger and the bell rang sharply out denoting bull's-eye.

"Little bobtail's gun went off when he had his eyes shut and made a bull's-eye. How's that for a scratch?" sneered one of a party of young fellows, who had been passing remarks about our hero ever since he entered.

Shorty made no reply to this taunt, but leveling his gun once more he took careful and deliberate aim and once more the bell signaled a bull's-eye scored.

"Pshaw! that's most too much bull-head luck for any fellow to have, but when you see a bantam-legged thing like that dumpy snoozer hittin' it twice, then I think it's time for good men to say something."

"Don't lip it so fresh, dere's an' ol' washerwoman from der oder side ob town waitin' outside for yer

"washbill," said Shorty, getting ready for another shot.

"Short legs'll have to learn to talk polite and not throw his smart sayings round so loose, or he'll get his ears boxed," growled another of the party.

"I guess there wasn't room enough in his little carcass to put any politeness," suggested another.

"Nader bedbug masher an' boardin'-house bilk heard from," said Shorty.

"What's that you said?" demanded the young fellow that had spoken before, placing himself in front of Shorty in a threatening manner.

"Ise remarked," said Shorty, dropping the butt of his ride on his antagonist's toes with all its force.

"Ow! ouch! darnation devils! Oh thunder, my corns, you idiot!" yelled the young man, growing a sickly pale as he sank down on the floor and commenced hauling off his boot.

"Better fetch a wheelbarrow an' cart 'im ter som' charity free soup horsepistol," suggested Shorty, bringing up his gun and making his third bull's-eye in the midst of the confusion and excitement.

"Oh, Caesar! I believe one of my toes's broke," groaned the man on the floor.

"Well I sorter s'pose dat nine good ones an' a broken one will be 'nuff ter 'low yer ter loaf 'round' der gin-mills an' free-lunch houses, an' if day will dat's 'bout all yer'll ever want ter use dem for," said Shorty, sarcastically.

"If I thought you done that on purpose I'd clean you right out where you are," said another pugilistically inclined member of the party.

"No yer wouldn't. Why, yer wouldn't clean yer own shirt," taunted Shorty.

"I'll slap your mouth, at any rate, you grinning baboon!" exclaimed the youth, striding frantically over towards Shorty.

Our hero allowed him to approach within a few feet then quickly, but quietly dropping the loaded rifle barrel to within an inch of the youth's nose, he said, slowly and clearly:

"Crawl!"

To say the young man was taken aback was no name for it; he was thunderstruck. His eyes opened, his hair stood up, and his whole body trembled as he backed himself away from that muzzle and made for the door.

"Hol' on, dere ish seventie cents for dose drinks," said the barkeeper, collaring him as he was going out.

"Well, I guess we'll waltz if dem snoozers don't want ter look down der telescope of dat gun any more," said Shorty. And after they settled their bill they started back to the Sherman House.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Daw' free-lunch sleepouters was rite on der fite bigger dan government jackasses, but dey weakened mitey sudden when I got der drop on 'em wid der shootin'-iron," laughed Shorty, lighting the gas and throwing himself into an easy chair, on their return to the hotel after their racket at the shooting gallery.

"Cooled down as if some one had put icicles down their backs," replied Shanks, tilting himself back in his seat.

"Oh, I jess tumbled ter dere little game der minit dey commenced ter gib me dere chin music. I saved dat dey owed a gin bill an' wanted ter pick a muss an' den climb out in der 'citement, but dat game didn't pan out shucks," said Shorty, blowing smoke wreaths up at the ceiling.

"I was fixing myself to lift that mussy snoozer under the ear when you took the marrow out of his backbone with that ride," observed Shanks.

"I noticed yer edgin' 'round' ter wher he was comin' for me, pard, but Ise bin a heap too long in der woods ter be scared by an owl," chuckled Shorty, opening the window and heaving his half-smoked cigar into the straw of a passing orange peddler's hand-cart, to the surprise and disgust of the peddler, as the straw catching fire he was forced to dump his entire load of fruit into the street to prevent it being roasted.

"How did it all happen? I don't see how in the world your cart could catch fire," asked a policeman, who was helping him to gather up his fruit.

"Vell, Misder Policeman, shust as I looks up I see wun of dose leedle dings dey calls comeds coom down inder mein card, an' der minute before nex de card id shust plaze ride away oup, und I shop a leedle un abssed my oranges inder adreed," explained the Teutonic vender, as he dander after a youth who was filling his pockets and cap with the fruit.

"Comet hit you. Oh, that be hanged for a yarn!" exclaimed the cop.

"You dink dot dere vas nein comed, when I see id mid mein zwie eyes und nose. Maype you dinks I ish gone gray mid mien prains," continued the peddler, growing indignant at anyone doubting his word.

"How did you know it was a comet?"

"Pecause I ish nod un shackass."

"Did it have a tail?"

"How you dinks I forsta? D'yo subbose dat I stopped der endress id?"

"Where is it now?"

"I ish sorry dot I didn't say dere ish un pig polliceman whants der know wher you will be alder und bottle while, Misder Comeda."

"Pick up your oranges yourself if you're so smart. I don't believe you'd know a comet from a bologna sausage with a lighted candle stuck in one end of it," said the policeman, indignantly.

"Hello, Ike, here's an orange lay out!" bawled a gutter snipe, to a couple more on the other side of the street, and the next moment they were darting around like flies around a molasses hogshead, dodging the peddler and scooping in some of the fruit when they got a show quicker than a hungry hen could gobble a grain of corn.

"Boliceman dere. Cum a leedle here mit your glub und pang dese young loavers und dhieves ober der head!" yelled the peddler, excitedly, as he gathered his fruit for a moment and then rushed frantically after one of the ridders, whom he discovered getting away with an orange.

"I'm watching for another comet," answered the cop, leaning up lazily against a building with folded arms.

After a hard struggle the peddler finally got his fruit back into his cart and started on, while Shorty and Shanks, who had been amused spectators of the scene from their windows, retired inside and enjoyed a long and hearty laugh over the affair.

"What's the bill of fare for to-day?" asked Shanks next morning, as he turned himself lazily out of bed and looked at his watch.

"I ain't had my peepers open long 'nuff ter cook it," answered Shorty, popping up in bed and rubbing his eyes with the back of his hands.

"Ain't got any biz on hand?"

"Not much."

"Then what do you say to a drive? I'd like to see something of the city, and around it," said Shanks.

"K'rect, pard. After we've chucked we'll slide 'round' ter some nob stable an' get dem ter fix us up der skyrocketest, lively team he's got; somfin dat won't take der dust from nothin' dat naps a tail."

"Now you're shoutin' sense; that suits me all over my clothes."

"I'll jess fix up der new bill ferter-night's show quicker dan an alligator can scorf a blue-bottle fly, an' den we'll polka off fer der hoss house," said Shorty, climbing into his clothes at a lively rate.

After a hearty breakfast Shorty called the troupe together, made the alteration in the bill, and assigned them their parts, most of which they had played before at the different cities they had visited, then, lighting cigars, Shanks and he started off to a livery stable that the hotel proprietor had directed them to.

"Want ter get a team dat can snake a wagon 'long der road 'thout lettin' der wheels touch der ground. We ain't goin' ter follow no hearse in a funeral procession, so yer can give us somefin' wid more red pepper, lightnin' an' snap 'bout dem dan oxen," said Shorty.

"I know just what you want, sir, and I can suit you to a dot," replied the proprietor, going out and ordering up a crack team.

"There, gemmen, if there's any stables 'round Chicago turns out any nobbier a rig than that, I'll sell out and go into the mule raising business for a livin'," continued the boss, as Shorty and Shanks took their seats in a light, tasty, stylish buggy, behind a pair of coal-black animals, with long tails and sweeping manes.

"Dis ain't slouchin' it 'round, if I knows myself! Dis is der top rung ob der style ladder—white gloves at der operay, wid a nigger ter fan yer, an' huckleberry shortcake when yer come out ain't a patch on ter a ragged boy's trousers 'long side ob dis for fun," observed Shorty, as they leaned back and admired the handsome buildings, while their team stepped as merrily and gayly along as if they spurned the ground they passed over.

They drove along Lake Michigan, in which they had an opportunity of seeing Lincoln, Union, and Lake Parks. The day was a fine one, and the boulevards leading from the business parts of the city were crowded with stylish turnouts, and sporting men dashed along behind steppers, whose gait showed them to be under three minutes. Of course Shorty wasn't slow in tackling some of them for a dash, and many were the teams that were forced to drop behind that team of blacks.

"Dere, dat 'pears ter be a nice road an' I guess dat I'll pull out an' let der nags hav' a chance ter get cooled off, for dey've been kitin' it like a school boy at nite wid a ghost after 'im," remarked Shorty, as he turned off into a cool, quiet lane and reined the horses up into a walk, while the two chums lit fresh cigars and lay off lazily.

After letting the animals loiter along and cool off for about twenty minutes or so, Shorty tightened up the ribbons and was starting ahead, when the queerest, ricketiest old turnout pulled out from behind him, and undertook to pass.

"Oh, Lord, what a horse!" roared Shanks.

"Look at der waggin' an' der whole get up," replied Shorty.

The turnout in question, was in reality, about as hard a looking turnout as could be scared up. The horse was a tall, long skeleton, with a mouse-colored hide dragged over his bones, but leaving them all showing as clearly and plainly as rungs in a ladder; his head hung down and his ears drooped forward as if he was dead. About seven straggling brown hairs adorned a stump of a tail, which he kept twitching nervously; in fact, this pendulum of a tail was all that showed he was alive. This bony quadruped was harnessed by means of a combination of rope and straps to a wagon, which was composed of a dry goods box sawed down and fastened upon the lower

part of a buggy; in this ramshackly old affair, a little, weakened, sun-browned old man was seated driving.

"Well, that takes the starch out of my collar for rigs; why, they oughtn't to allow such a feeble old bone yard of a horse to be driven; it's cruelty to animals, besides I'll bet the whole thing'll fall to pieces before it goes half a mile," said Shanks.

"Well, I guess dat we won't wait an' take his dust for dat half mile," said Shorty, pulling to one side and chirruping to his pair of blacks, who dashed forward, but strange to say, failed to pass the skeleton steed, for as they came abreast the weakened driver suddenly jerked up his rope reins, and the bone yard lifting up his long neck, slowly struck out at a gait that astonished Shorty and Shanks nearly out of their senses, and threatened to shake the rickety old wagon and weakened old driver to pieces.

"By George! the skeleton's come to life, and he knows how to move, too," remarked Shanks, as the bony nag went ahead.

"Well, if dat bunch ob bones can't skin it, an' I ain't der wuss-fooled clam in der puddle, yer can shoot me wid boiled beans; but one ting sartain, it won't do arter passin' an' beatin' all der big bugs' teams ter go hom' an' 'knowledge ter havin' had ter swallow der dust ob dat ol' frame," said Shorty, as he urged his team to fresh efforts.

Side by side they would fly, Shorty, by word and whip encouraging his mettled steeds, who fairly flew as if they knew that their master was eager to win. Then, just as Shorty and Shanks would fancy themselves gaining a little, the weakened old fellow would smile a sickly smile, tug the rope reins, and the skeleton plug would make his long, bony legs stretch out over the road, carrying him once more to the front.

"Tain't no use, an' it's too darned hard on der nags; we're beat an' may's well 'knowledge der corn, for it don't lay in dis pair of horses' skins ter get away wid dat ole bone yard. If dat ol' feller dere hasn't taken more conceit out of dis shawl-pin dan dere's meat ter an egg, den yer can peg me ter death wid rotten apples. He picked me up so fresh, I bit so gulpingly, an' arter he played me for a flat till he was tired, he's gone off laffin in his sleeve," said Shorty, pulling up his excited and flying steeds, and letting the old man go to the front.

"Horse! Why, that horse would fool the d—I with a pair of spectacles on—if he is a horse. I'll be hanged if I don't believe he's some kind of a frame that you work by electricity or steam. The idea of an old bunch of bones that you can read a paper through, and who looks as if all he wanted in the world was a place to lay down and die in, getting up suddenly, shaking his skinny old carcass together and beating one of the fastest teams in Chicago," grumbled Shanks, who felt as sore as a boil over being beaten, and was chewing his cigar as savagely as if it was the weakened old driver's bones.

"D'yer know what I'm goin' ter do, pard?" asked Shorty, after a pause.

"No," said Shanks, tersely.

"Well I'm goin' ter foller dat ol' snoozer home an' I'm jess goin' ter buy dat ol' skeleton if dere's 'nuff money in der treasury of der New York Minstrels."

"Buy that ghost of a horse?"

"Yes, der whole rig."

"What, wagon and all?"

"Yee-ep."

"Going to exhibit it with the troupe?"

"Ise goin' ter drive dat skul an' bones plug away wid a pile of dese Chicago ham's dingbads an' Ise goin' ter gib der minstrels a good puff dat'll fill der house chock full, while we're 'ere. D'yer tumble now?" said Shorty.

"I smell a big-sized rat. I guess we won't be the only ones sold in horseflesh," answered Shanks.

"I tink dat we can scoop in a pile of stamps, hav' a high cock-a-doodle of a racket an' tak' der starch out of som' of dese sports dat 'lows dat dey boss der road."

"Lordy! why there ain't a clam peddler 'round the city but'll bet you all he's worth he can beat that crow-bait," laughed Shanks.

"Ise goin' ter trot 'im on der course 'fi can get 'im, but I'll bet dat dat dried up old strawberry dat was drivin' 'im is jess as sharp as barbers' razors or a March wind an' knows jess as well what dat nag can do as der ber best jockey dat ever held a rein," said Shorty.

"Shouldn't wonder if needle points were dull to him."

"Well, if he wants spondulicks an's willin' ter let me hav' der bone yard in s'change dere's goin' ter be a trade. Hello! dere he's turnin' in ter his shanty, looks like der rest of der get up, don't it?"

The farm was a narrow, long strip of poor, sandy land, fenced in with a thin brush fence that seemed to hang together for support, and which the weight of a small bird would hopelessly wreck.

The house was tall as a flag-pole and thin as a postage stamp, and to one corner of it had been fixed a barn and stable of the same lean character as the rest of the things.

The old fellow, who was busy unharnessing, scarcely raised his eyes when Shorty drove up.

"Pretty fast hoss, dat," said Shorty, opening the conversation.

"A leetle spy, stranger, thaats all," answered the old fellow, speaking as if his words and his chew of tobacco had got mixed up.

"What makes him so thin?"

"Wal, stranger, he's naterly of a lean sort of hoss



"Go it bones," cried Shorty, astride of the dry goods box and yelling at his bony plug. "Go it old boy."

an' yeou see, when the times is so hard, why we've all got to eat a heap less than we used to."

"Den, mebbe, yer wouldnt mind sellin' 'im. Der fac' is, I've taken a notion dat I'd like ter buy der whole rig. Now, what do yer say ter sell it?" asked Shorty, coming down to business.

"Wal, yeou kneow, straanger, that theoug he ain't so pretty as he might be, still he can skin them all when he moves."

"What d'yer say ter two hundred cash for der rig?" inquired Shorty.

"Wal, I guess not."

"Two hundred and fifty?"

"Neow, straanger."

"Three hundred ready money?"

"Times is tuff, but I guess I'll keep my hoss for awhile longer."

"Three hundred an' fifty?"

The old man shook his weazened up face and let fly a volley of tobacco juice at a thin, starved hen that was passing, nearly knocking her off her feet.

"Four hundred?"

"Yeou see, straanger, we're all used to the old hoss's looks, and I think we ortent to part."

"Will yer take four hundred an' fifty?"

"The hoss mayn't be worth all that money, but then—"

"I'll giv' yer five hundred, slap down, an' yer can buy half a dozen bustin' good plugs for dat much sugar," said Shorty, interrupting him.

"One's 'bout all that I can 'ford to keep, an' this one we've got is trained deown so ekonomikel that he don't eat more than a chicken," aiming another shot of tobacco juice at the hen, but missing badly.

"Five hundred an' fifty square Yankee dollars, what d'yer say tew dat, little hoss fly?"

"Carn't take it, straanger."

"What, or how much in thunder d'yer want for yer Jug an' rattletrap of a wagon wid dem ol' ropes an' straps bobbin' 'round for harness?"

"Wal, stranger, yeou see we wasn't thinkin' 'bout sellin' just yet," cackled the old fellow, cunningly, as he squinted out of the corners of his eyes at Shorty.

"Yer can hav' six hundred if yer want it, an' if yer don't jess git up at oncet an' say yer won't, an' how much yer do ax."

"Hain't dercided yet, straanger, becouse I'll 'leow that six hundred dollars is a pretty high figur' fur that are critter; when yeou stand off and look at him, but when yeou get to kneow him, yeou'd be surprised what that same old hoss kneows and what he can do. Why, straanger, that old animal could hev trotted jess twice as quick as he dun if I'd wanted tew let him go," continued the old fellow, picking up a

thin splinter of pine and picking his sharp, rat-like teeth with it.

"Six hundred and fifty, giv yer a check on a bank in der city," offered Shorty.

"Tain't the money I keer so much 'bout, theough the times is awfully tuff, but you see—"

"Oh, him be hanged!" exclaimed Shanks, losing all patience with the weazened old leech.

"Seven hundred an' dat's der top peg yer can tak' or leav' it; I don't care a clam; I ain't goin' ter stop all day here jawin' 'bout a hoss."

"He's yeourn, sir."

"Dat's biz; now I want yer ter keep 'im for me for a week. I'll pay yer all der board yer want ter charge, an' I don't want yer ter let on 'bout sellin' 'im; com' rite in ter-morrow ter der Sherman House, an' ax fur Shorty, an' yer money'll be all O K for yer; now tak' good care of der whole rig for me till I see yer agin," directed Shorty, and having given him a hundred dollars to bind the bargain, they drove off towards the city.

"Well, you've got your bone yard at real estate prices," laughed Shanks, when they were once more on the road.

"I'd made up my mind ter have 'im an' I'd have give two thousand but I'd have had 'im," said Shorty, "Oh, I ain't grumbling, pard, only I'm 'traid the cussed old frame'll die 'fore we can get a chance to trot him," said Shanks.

On their way back they dropped into one of the famous road hotels, the rooms of which were crowded by the sports and bigbugs of the city owning fast teams, who were drinking wine, smoking the best cigars, and blowing about the speed of their horses.

"Dat's der spot where I'll scare up a match ter-morrer," said Shorty, after they had some wine and fresh cigars.

"Yes, they're on the sport there every time."

"Yer'd better get a rig ter-morrer afternoon an' com' out ere. I'll drive down ter der 'ole man's, change my rig, get into some other wraps, an' come back ter der hotel wid der ole skeleton. I must try an' skin all der loose money I can raise 'fore den," continued Shorty, and shortly after they entered the city, drove to the livery stable, and walked around to the hotel.

"Course, chum, dis tings got ter be dead mum twixt yer an' I. I ain't goin' ter let der rest of der gang into it till der las' minit," explained Shorty.

"I'm a dummy; by the way, pard, I'll telegraph for a draft," replied Shanks.

The next afternoon, just as the crowd of sports were thickest around the sporting hotel on the road, and the sheds were filled with some of Chicago's fastest steppers, Shorty, dressed in a rusty, half-worn

suit, drove the skeleton steed up to the door amidst shouts of laughter.

"I want som' of yer stablemen ter kinder keep an eye on Barebones, 'cause he's sorter kittenish when he's way from hom'," said Shorty, fastening him to a tree and going in doors, where he was speedily a butt for everybody to cod.

"Is that horse of yours fast, Shortboy?" asked a dandyish sport.

"Yer bet yer glass eyes he's fas', Why der las' funeral dad was at, we was der fust to der grave; beat der hearse, an' all der mourners. How's dat for scootin'?" answered Shorty, innocently.

"Well, I'll bet a cool thousand that there ain't a thing 'round these parts I can't beat in a mile dash with my grayhorse, Lightning," said a sport, who appeared to be a power amongst them, and he leaned back against the mantelpiece.

"Dat's stiff talk," said Shorty, coming over to where he was standing. "Bout what odds would yer giv' an' trot a mile 'gainst ol' Barebones?"

A shout of laughter went up at the very idea of the old battered frame, that was tied to the tree outside, trotting against Mr. Winall's famous trotter.

"Oh, go 'way, farmer; don't you make yourself ridiculous. Why, my horse is a trained trotter, and one of the fastest in Chicago," answered Mr. Winall.

"Well, Barebones ain't 'zactly a trained trotter; but I'll put up 'bout three hundred of Uncle Sammy's picturs dat yer can't beat 'im much ter der mile," said Shorty, pulling out a big leather wallet.

"He's drunk!"

"Take him up, Winall you might as well go home three hundred richer as not," advised some of his friends.

"It's just about a mile from Hudson's Hotel, above here, to this place, and I won't say I'll beat you half way in, but I'll bet the thousand against your three hundred, and put the money up if you want to, that I'll beat you so bad you won't be in sight hardly by the time we reach here," said Winall, after going out and having a look at Shorty's shackly old turnout.

"Dat's a go," said Shorty, putting his stake up in the proprietor's hands. "Mebbe dere's som' more sports 'round here dat wants ter scoop in som' money, for dere's a little more lef' in der ol' pocket-book."

"I'll bet you a thousand more on the same odds," said Winall, confidently.

"I'll bet you a couple of thousand 'gainst six hundred."

"Well, I guess dat I'se riskin' too much of der ol' man's money; I'se not so dead sure 'bout Barebones as I ort ter be," said Shorty, doubtfully, and the next

moment they were offering ten to one against him, which he quietly accepted, while Shanks in another part of the room, was picking up all the long odds that were offered.

A starter, judges and parties to keep the road as clear as they could, having been chosen, Mr. Winall and Shorty started away for the starting point, the appearance of the latter's turnout setting everybody off into fits of laughter, while the jokes that were passed at Shorty's expense would have filled a two-volume book.

The course over which they were to trot was a straight, level dash of good road, starting from in front of Hudson's Hotel, and ending in the center of Stevenson's Sporting House, from which they had just departed.

Winall, who had dashed off with his gray trotter, was at the starting point and waiting some ten or fifteen minutes before Shorty trundled up.

"You'll have to make better time than that, Short-bones, if you want to get back in time to see me leaving for home," he said, on Shorty's appearance.

"Der race ain't ober yet by a long chalk," replied Shorty, as he drove down and turned, coming back side by side with Winall's horse.

"Go!" yelled the starter.

"Good-bye, boneyard," exclaimed Winall, slapping his feet-footed gray with the reins.

"Mebbe I'll see yer agin 'fore we're thro' wid der fig," said Shorty, jerking the old ropelines, and old Barebones, as if he knew what was up, picked up his head, cocked his ears, and slinging out his long thin legs, whirled the old rickety wagon up side by side with Winall's fancy turn out, to that gentleman's intense astonishment.

"G'lang! Geet up! w-h-a-t you doing there?" yelled Winall, tapping his gray horse with the whip as he fairly flew over road.

"Go it, bones," chuckled Shorty, slapping the old frame with the lines, and laughing aloud to see him take his place and keep it alongside of Winall's "Lightning."

Side by side they had dashed for nearly three quarters of a mile; sometimes the gray, urged on by his driver, who saw not only a loss of money, but himself the laughing stock of Chicago, would forge slightly ahead, but the next moment the gaunt head of Barebones would loom up at the front.

"Any message yer want ter send ahead ter dem 'ers, I'll tote for yer. Kase it won't do ter fool long a way any longer," said Shorty, shaking his reins and giving a few sharp yelps at his bony plug, who shook himself together, cocked up his ears, wagged his hairless tail, and striking out with his thin legs, he carried Shorty several lengths to the front, and brought him in the winner by some forty odd feet.

"Great Je-hos-ophat! what a sell. I'm going home," was all Winall said, and he drove off.

"Who in blazes are you, boy?" asked another, who had been pretty badly stuck.

"I see Shorty ob der New York Minstrels, dat's who I is at present," chuckled our little friend, as he rolled up a wad of bills and stuffed them in his pocket.

"That's enough. That let's me out. I've often heard of Shorty and his rackets, and now I've seen him to the tune of a couple of thousands," said the other, going in after a drink.

"Pretty solid old roast this; you've soaked them for all that's out. We've made as pretty a little haul of wealth out of this as a feller cares about having around his clothes," said Shanks, after they were alone. "Now, first thing, what are you going to do with the turn out?"

"I've thort of dat an' telergrated ter a friend in 'Frisco, an' I guess we'll ship 'im on dere by der railroad; he'll go safe 'nuff. I'll send some good man' long ter take care of him, an' I tink we can catch some of der fellers on dere snoozin'," replied Shorty, and they returned to the city shortly afterwards.

Shorty's horse race racket soon became the talk of the city, and full houses greeted the company nightly during their stay, and it was with extreme regret that the Chicago boys bade them good-bye on their departure for Milwaukee at the close of their engagement.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE trip between Chicago and Milwaukee proved a quiet and uneventful one. The troupe amused themselves chinning, reading the papers, playing cards, and snoozing as they felt in the humor, and no one was sorry when the conductor announced Milwaukee in a tone of voice loud enough to have answered for New York.

At the depot was the usual array of hacks, profanity, dirty-faced children, whips, shouting, baggage-wagons, bewilderment, bundles, omnibuses, hurry, and shoved-about passengers. After yelling himself hoarse, Shorty made a Teutonic driver of a stage understand that his party were not Bashl Bazouks, and that they desired to be driven to the Plankinton House, where rooms had been secured them by their advance agent.

Arriving, after a short drive through the "Cream City," at the hotel they were warmly welcomed by the proprietor.

"So you're the famous New York Minstrel troupe that beat the OUR BOYS Club of Louisville. I suppose, though, you got hold of a muffin nine; they don't

amount to much on the ball play, do they?" remarked the landlord, as they registered their names.

"Very good club," said Shorty, tersely, and the conversation dropped.

The company opened at the Academy of Music to a good house. Everything worked well from the rising to the final dropping of the curtain. The troupe were as funny as ever, and provoked the house into roars of laughter with their comicalities. Dave Reed's songs and dances were encored, and Shorty as usual capped the climax, and stirred the audience into rounds of cheers by his banjo performance and outlandish remarks. The people, even way out in Wisconsin, had heard of him and his rackets, and welcomed him warmly to their midst, while the boy portion of his audience testified their delight by loud and continuous clapping of hands.

"Hey, Shorty, how 'bout dat base ball match wid de OUR BOYS Club?" yelled an urchin from the gallery.

"Oh, we got away wid dem, kid," answered Shorty, picking up his banjo and trotting off the stage.

"Well, pard, what do you say to Milwaukee?" asked Shanks, as they walked home after the performance.

"Dere's plenty of beer an' yaller brick," said Shorty.

"Well, let's go in here and throw in some of the first, for I'm as dry as a graven image," said Shanks, leading the way into a large beer hall, which they found full of people just out from the minstrel show.

"I tell you, fellows, that Shorty would make a tombstone laugh. I wonder if he's the same chap that beat that Louisville Nine at base ball?" observed one of the bystanders, as he blew the froth from his foaming lager.

"Yes, he's the same coon; but I hear OUR BOYS Club here say that it wasn't anything more than a muffin game at the best."

Shorty said nothing, and a few minutes afterwards, having finished their lager, they returned to the hotel and retired.

A couple of evenings later, as they were coming out of a sporting-club house, Shanks suddenly asked:

"What in thunder were them fellows hinting around about anybody winning muff games?"

"Oh, dem's a lot of pereshunals ball-tossers wid a sprinklin' of der OUR BOYS Club throwed in, an' dey was only squealin' an' sinuatin' dat der game we played in Louisville was a snide 'fair," answered Shorty.

"Maybe they wouldn't think it so snide if they should tackle us," suggested Shanks.

"Pshaw! haven't yer tumbled ter der slurs an' back talk dat I've been gettin' ever since we struck Chicago? De OUR BOYS Club of dat town giv' me some fearful back-caps, but I scooped 'em an' said nixy, an' now der OUR BOYS of Milwaukee dey've got an idea dat I've scared ter say beans, an' dat's jess where dey're fryin' a large-sized beefsteak," explained Shorty, reaching up and touching a pompous, red-nosed man on the nose with his cane.

"Hey! Hello! D—n it, fellow! What're doing?" exclaimed the pompous party, starting back and clapping his hand to his nose.

"Beg pardon, sir, thort it was a littenin' bug," said Shorty, dodging out of the way of the old fellow's stick and mixing with the people on the street.

"Then you've got a half-way idea of tackling one of these boss clubs before you're through with them?" asked Shanks, when he had rejoined his mischievous and prank-playing little chum.

"I dunno yet, pard; but dere's one ting dat's as sartin as dat der Lord made sparrergrass an' little 'taters, an' dat is dat dey ain't goin' ter keep a shovin' dis blowhard biz down dis chick's throat wid a crooked stick. Der OUR BOYS, of Milwaukee, may be a rippin' good nine an' I kno' dey is; dey may sling a nasty bat, toss a littenin' ball an' play fieldin' up ter handle, but for all dat dey don't own a rooster dat can flop an' crow ober der New York Minstrels, when Shorty's 'round, widout dey show der size of dere spurs. Savey?"

The next morning while they were sitting at breakfast Shorty opened a copy of OUR BOYS story paper, which had just arrived by the morning's mail, and after glancing over it for a few moments, read aloud:

"A GRAND BASE BALL CONTEST.

"\$100 prize offered by the editor of OUR BOYS sporting newspaper to the winning club.

"The OUR BOYS Club, of Milwaukee, against any amateur club in the West."

"That's the music. Talk's cheap, but hundred dollar greenbacks counts every pop!" exclaimed Shanks, enthusiastically.

"Yer head's 'bout level, pard. It ain't ebbery boss dat's slingin' dose green century plants round so loose and careless. OUR BOYS sticks up der stamps for its readers ter play for, you bet. Now, chum, we'll jess try an' scoop in dat stamp for der boys. I'll speak ter der ol' nine rite away arter chuck, and den I'll mak' it my biz ter drop in wher der OUR BOYS gang hang out an' listen ter dere jawin'," said Shorty, sipping his coffee meditatively.

"That's what suits me. We can commence practicing to-day, and as we've got our rigs all as good as new, it won't take us no time to get in shape; so if you'll scratch up the match, we'll do our level best," replied Shanks.

"I'll fix it, if dere's any fix ter it, an' I tink dey've got der idea dat dey can whitewash our gang," said Shorty, rising from the table and strolling into the smoking-room, where he found most of the company smoking, chinning, and reading the papers, and calling in his old Louisville nine off by themselves, Shorty explained the whole affair to them, told them of the sneers of the Chicago clubs and the hints of the Milwaukee Nines. Of the insinuations of "crooked playing" that had been heard, of the liberal and handsome prize offered by OUR BOYS paper of New York, and of his proposed visit and challenge of the OUR BOYS, of Milwaukee, for the prize and championship.

"Go for them, bald-headed, little boss. Challenge them; don't take no slack, don't back water, an' I'll speak for the nine in saying that we'll stick to your back and play ball for all that's in the game," answered Dave Reed, enthusiastically, and the rest cordially and heartily seconded him.

"Want to pick us up for a hay-bag nine from the country, do they?" asked Tambo.

"Maybe they won't have such a soft gumdrop to suck when they meet us on the diamond," laughed Bonea.

"Specially if Shorty gets to knocking any more of those out-of-the-world sockdolaging home-run balls," said Dave.

"To say nothing of scooping in the hundred dollars. I tell you, boys, that'd buy a pie of lager at five cents a schooner," remarked the left field.

"Well, den, boys, dat settles it. I'll skip out now, skid down town, an' see what I can do wid dat oder gang," said Shorty, going out on his mission.

"I believe that this OUR BOYS Nine, of Milwaukee, are heavy weather fellows at the fielding biz," observed Dave.

"And you can bet your highmuckynuck that they're going to do their prettiest to keep the championship, pocket the prize money, and send us off with a flea in our ear," chimed in right field.

"Yes, but the New York Minstrels ain't taking fleas in their ears this time," said an active little fellow who played third base in the nine.

"Korrek, spelt with a K. If Shorty makes this match, boys, I'm going to play to win. That's the kind of a soup-plate I am," said Dave.

"And if you catch me fumbling any balls you can cut me up for gese bait." That's the kind of a folding step-ladder I am," said Shanks, sticking his long legs up against the mantel-piece.

"And if I don't curve an' twist the balls for them till they get puzzled, I'm ready to be kicked by mules." That's the kind of an oyster stew I am," remarked the pitcher.

"If I play first base, and you fellows will only put them into me red-hot, and if I don't freeze to them if they're hotter than fire, you can call me a butter-fingers. That's the kind of a pickle-bottle I am," said Dave Reed.

In the meantime Shorty had got under his hat, lit a fresh cigar and rambled off down Wisconsin Street till he came to a club-room, where he knew he would strike some of the crowd he was looking for.

"Hello, Shorty," said the captain of OUR BOYS Nine, as he entered. "I hear that in that game you played wid dem Louisville muffs you used a football so as your fellows could see to catch it."

"If fellers played ball wid dere muffs what a boss nine you'd be der captain of, wouldn't yer?" retorted Shorty, coolly.

"Oh, we don't catch balls with one hand and eat ham sandwiches with the other up in this town," said the catcher of the club, who was sorting a euchre hand.

"No, I guess dat yer don't catch dem wid eld' han' 'roun' 'ere, duff bags."

"Did you hear about the one hundred dollar prize that OUR BOYS sporting paper for boys, has put up for any club that can beat us?" asked the captain. "But I was just telling the fellows that I guess we will have the fun of dividing it around amongst ourselves, for there ain't any club around these parts that dares to tackle OUR BOYS of Milwaukee."

"Oh, yes dere am," said Shorty, quietly.

"Where are they? I'd like to see them."

"Oh, dey're rite 'ere in dis yaller city."

"What's their names?" demanded the captain, skeptically.

"Well, I don't know 's I've got any rite ter tell more'n one, but I guess dat'll satisfy yer."

"What club is it then that wants to toe the home plate against us?"

"Der New York Minstrel Nine am yer claims for one, an' arter dat we'll see an' talk somfin more 'bout dat muffin' at Louisville," spoke up Shorty.

"Pshaw! you're joking, better go practice wid stuffed clubs and codfish balls, and leave well enough alone," sneered the OUR BOYS captain.

"Say, Captain Beetlebug, yer jes wipe off yer chin, an' don't swim out ober yer head. Der New York Minstrel Nine don't weaken worth a cent. We savy dat you've got a humpin' good old club, but if yer want ter play us say der word an' drop 'chawin' a rag."

"Why, confound it, Shorty, we'll goose-egg you, and what'll dey say in New York when they see the score of the game?" asked the captain.

"I guess when dey see der score dey'll say: By George, dere's Shorty an' his gang scooped in dat blow-hard Milwaukee Nine an' der hundred dollars easy as rollin' off a log," answered Shorty, laughingly.

"Then you're really in earnest about playing?"

"Sure as rats has tails."

"When will you be ready to meet us?"



At last a low-curved beauty came toward the captain, and raising his bat he sent it flying high over the head of Shorty.

"Der day arter ter-morrer, if yer say der word," said Shorty.

"All right, we'll play you, but I'll tell you one thing, Shorty, right here; you'll be the sickest old club that ever left Milwaukee after we're through with you. You'll find you haven't got hold of any such soft snap as the Louisvilles were," remarked the OUR Boys captain, positively.

"Give us a breeze; yer ought ter get yer head fanned. Lem'me tell yer dat der New York hams is got pow'ful sound an' tough constitushuns, an' don't get sick when dey hear a feller blow. So yer can depend on us bein' on der ground at three sharp," replied Shorty, getting up and inviting all hands to a general smile and smoke, after which he took his departure and hastened back to the hotel, where he found all the boys eagerly and anxiously awaiting his coming.

"Well! well! well! well!" was the general exclamation from all sides, the moment our hero entered the room.

"How many wells make a river? Boys, it's all hunky dory O K doodledum!" laughed Shorty, perching himself on a corner of the table. "Der match is fixed, an' der OUR Boys gang threatens ter kerwollop der New York Minstrels out of their boots an' socks."

"When 're they going to do all this?"

"Der day arter ter-morrer at three der show opens; eberyting is fixed, an' now, fellers, le's jess put in a little ob der tallest ole practicin' dat we eber thort of. Dem oder fellers tink dey've got a reg'lar ole puddin' of a layout on us, an' I want ter fool 'em so bad dat dey'll tink der duyvul's broke loose an' got hol' on 'em," said Shorty, and a few minutes later the nine set off for a practice ground, where they spent their time up till the dinner hour. In the afternoon they were out and at it again, and the next morning's sun wasn't out much before the boys were. Every man felt within himself a burning desire to win, and was determined that no effort of his should be spared to attain that end. Of course with such a united feeling success is half way won. Shorty, in his shirt sleeves, and with the perspiration standing in beads on his comical old face, worked like a beaver, stopping "hot balls" fresh from the "stick" with a coolness and contempt for blisters perfectly amazing. Shanks as catcher was here, there and everywhere that a ball was likely to drop, his long legs and arms enabling him to gobble balls that nine catchers out of ten would have let slide; but the great chalk in his favor was his accurate throwing; without a second's hesitation he would snatch a foul tip and send the ball into second baseman's hands as accurately as if it had been fired out of a rifle.

"Dere, boys," said Shorty, as they were putting on

their coats on the evening of their last practice day. "I tell yer dat dere club dat can bat heavier balls, pick 'em up quicker, field dem home sooner an' make less fumblyin' wid der ball dan dis gang can ort ter have der prize, but I don't tink dere's any drove of hossfies 'round dis city dat's able ter do it."

The afternoon of the match found the Milwaukee ball grounds crowded with an eager, anxious, and good-humored crowd. Shorty, with an eye ever to business, had papered the fences and bill-boards with posters announcing the great match, and as the OUR Boys Club was looked upon as invincible, the Milwaukeeans turned out *en masse* to see the strangers taken in and done for.

Each nine was cheered when they left their dressing-rooms and put in an appearance, and the looks of the different players criticised and commented upon.

"They're darned well matched as far as the men goes, but hear my gentle voice, that Shorty feller is boss of his nine. He knows just what every man he's got can do, and he's going to put them just where they'll do it, and there won't be no grumbling 'bout it. Now there's just nine captains in OUR Boys nine, and that's why I'm going to stick my little pile right on runty and his New York gang," said an old gray-mustached sport to a confidential friend after watching the nines critically.

An umpire was chosen, and the captains, having tossed for innings, Shorty announced the result with:

"New York, take your places in the field."

"Play!" said the umpire, a moment later, when the men had taken their places and the great prize contest was opened.

Hardly had the word passed his lips when swift as a cannon-ball, yet full of twists, flew the ball from the pitcher's hands, to be snatched by Shanks as if it was a passing feather and returned; a second ball, swifter even than the first followed, and the striker, striking at it, was surprised to see it spin up in the air and come down in Shanks outstretched paws. "He pitches like twisted lightning," remarked the victim, as he joined his comrades.

There was a visible rustle among the crowd as the next striker, a tall, heavily-built, broad-shouldered young fellow advanced to the home-plate, and yells from his friends and acquaintances of—"Bust her, Hank!"

"Show dose fellers what yer can do."

"Give it a corker!"

"I'll bet he makes his second on the hit!"

"Paste it, Hank!"

"One ob der heavy hitters," mused Shorty, and by

a motion perceptible only to his own nine, he mentioned his fielders to lay out and be watchful.

Shorty was right. He proved a heavy hitter, sending the ball clear over into the extreme left field, amidst the cheers of the crowd.

"Make your second!" yelled his captain, as the man started to run; but he changed his mind when he saw that it was all the man could do to reach first base, so rapidly was the ball fielded in.

Striker number three sent a daisy cutter in Shorty's direction, who picked it up, put it in red hot to Dave Reed, on first, and Dave, wheeling, sent it humming to second base in time to make a double play and wind up half of the inning.

"Bet a tinner the New Yorkers don't make a run," exclaimed a flashily-dressed gentleman.

"I'm your man; bet you a hundred, if you want to, that they will," said the old gray-mustached sport, who had pinned his confidence on the Shorty nine, and was backing it right and left with his money.

One of the fielders went first to the bat on the New Yorker's side and went out on a foul tip. Shanks followed, and throwing all his nervous energy and force into his stroke, he sent the ball whistling down into center field, and by the active use of his long legs managed to reach his second base amidst the applause of the crowd. Dave Reed followed, making a one base hit, and letting Shanks down to his third, from where he was brought home by a corker knocked by Shorty, who took his first, stole his second on a fumbled ball, and came home flying on a safe ball batted by Tambo, and the innings closed with three runs scored.

"Come, fellows, we've caught a tartar, and I tell you we've got to play up or we'll get waxed right here on our own dunghill," observed the OUR Boys shortstop, as he fanned himself with his cap.

"Sugar! You boys talk like children! Because that crowd manage to scratch a couple of runs you think we've got our match. Why, we'll beat them three to one yet," snapped the captain, selecting a bat with scrupulous care and taking his place.

"I'm not betting, but I guess the captain's find out that it looks a pile more like us getting soaked, three to one, mumbled the little shortstop.

"Low ball," said the captain.

"Low ball!" repeated the umpire.

Two or three low balls were pitched before the captain found one to suit him. At last a low-curved beauty came toward him, and raising his bat he sent it flying high over the head of Shorty, who jumped for it, only to fall into the hands of the second baseman, who made a magnificent running-catch amidst tumultuous applause.

"Darnation! Why don't them fellows play all over the field at once," muttered the captain, sulkily.

"Seems to me they're doing it pretty well," replied the shortstop, as he took up his "willow" and trotted off for a crack at the ball; but going out on a foul neatly taken by Shanks, number three batting a fly which was scooped in by the left field.

In the second innings the New Yorkers were retired in one, two, three order.

The third and fourth inning were a continuation of the blank business, neither party scoring.

In the fifth inning, when the Our Boys Club had three on bases, Shorty made a magnificent catch, throwing himself in the way of a red-hot ball fresh from the bat, he snatched it in his right hand, sent it to first, who in turn passed it to third, making a capital double play, and causing the immense crowd of spectators to cheer them to the echo.

The sixth inning was a blank for both sides.

In the seventh, by heavy batting, two runs were made by Our Boys Club, amidst the wildest cheering and shouting of their friends in the crowd.

One, two, three was the order in which the New York Minstrel Nine were disposed of, and the eighth inning commenced with a score of three to two in favor of the New Yorkers.

The captain of Our Boys led off with a heavy hit to right field, which gave him his first; the shortstop sent a safe-throw that let the captain to second and himself to first; then came their heaviest batter, and with a tremendous hit to left field, he sent the captain home, tying the game amidst the wildest applause. Two frys and a foul, caught, disposed of the team, and left the game three to three.

The New Yorkers failed to get in a chalk in their inning, and the ninth inning came on with a tie.

"Two to one—one hundred to fifty on the New Yorkers and their short-legged captain, if it flattens me out worse than a turtle," sang out the old, gray-mustached sport, game to the backbone.

One of Our Boys' safest hitters took the stick and batted a nice ball that gave him his first by shinning lively.

Another good striker followed, and sent the ball humming into the outer field, and himself on to first base, the other fellow having climbed to second.

Shorty glanced around the field as he saw the broad-shouldered young fellow that had opened the ball toe the plate. Every man was in his place, bent forward, and almost holding their breaths to see the result of the hit.

"Soak her!"

"Knock the stuffing out of it, Hank!"

"He's the boy can do it!"

"Knock it out of sight!" yelled the crowd.

Hank struck at the third or fourth ball, hit it fair, and it flew straight from the bat to the front, as if it had been shot from a gun. The little pitcher saw it coming, knew it was his great opportunity to save the day; and fearful as the force was, he jumped for it, snatched it, and though it threw him to the ground with frightful force, the game little fellow rolled over and sent it in to Dave Reed, on first, in time to let him put it to third, putting out two men.

Maybe, boys, the crowd didn't cheer and yell their applause at the plucky little fellow's grit and play.

The third man of Our Boys Nine went out on a foul tip, and the New Yorkers came in to close the last inning amidst the most intense excitement.

Shanks drove a ball high over right field's head and made his second base, and Shorty following and getting a ball to suit him, socked it, sending it to the extreme limit of the field, bringing Shanks in and winning the game, the next three strikers batting out in one, two, three order.

"Three cheers for the New York Club!" proposed an old gentleman, and they were given with a vengeance.

"I knew Shorty and his gang were the correct oard, and I stuck up every dollar I had in the world on them, and they're just the gamest, toughest, pluckiest little nine that ever tossed a ball," said the old gray-mustached sport as he raked in his ducats.

"Three hearty New York cheers and a Bengal tiger for the Our Boys Club of Milwaukee!" proposed Shorty, and the boys gave them in a way and with a vim that only New York boys can give.

Of course Shorty and his party found themselves the heroes of the hour; a banquet was given to them and their nightly performances were packed to a sardine-box degree, while hundreds were unable to get within the doors.

The hundred dollar prize was promptly handed over to Shorty by the Our Boys newspaper agent at the conclusion of the game, and Shorty, after handing a corner of it to the umpire, gave each of his players a like sum, except the little pitcher, to whom he handed over twenty, adding his own ten to the pile.

"If it was twenty thousand it wouldn't be a cent too big for der grit yer showed in snatchin' dat decidin' ball, bald-headed, little feller," he said, as he handed the money to him.

But the days flew around, and as time and horse-car conductors wait for no one, the New Yorkers found themselves once more on the pack up and travel, having an engagement at San Francisco.

There was the usual hand-shakings, good-byes, and parting schooners of Milwaukee beer before the train rolled out of the depot, bound for the Pacific.

CHAPTER XV.

We left our mischievous little friend, Shorty, and

his party on the train, leaving Milwaukee for San Francisco.

"Der fust ting we'd best do, fellers, is ter 'point a committee ter take a spin thro' der train, an' snatch on ter der best lay-out for seats dat dey can drop on, for I tell yer dis is no bob-tail hoss-car ride yer takin' dis pop," remarked Shorty, after they had changed cars and were bumping over the Western Union Railroad toward Iowa.

Reaching Iowa, another transfer of cars took place, and they sped through that State on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, connecting at Omaha, Nebraska, with the Union Pacific Railroad, which was to convey them across the continent.

Having a few hours at their disposal before the departure of the train, our party availed themselves of it to stretch their legs and see the city. Strolling slowly through one of the streets, they suddenly found themselves face to face with a group of Pawnee Indians, a peaceable tribe having several lodges outside of the city.

"Injuns, by hokey!" exclaimed Shorty, clapping his hands to his scalp in such a comical manner that everybody laughed.

"Ugh, boy man," grunted one of the Indians.

"What in the name of Pocahontas are they, men or woman?" asked Dave Reed, looking at their strange mixture of blankets, leggings, skirts and flat faces.

"Why can't you see they're squaws by their looks and dress. You don't expect you'd find one of the male Indians loafing around a city, do you?" answered Shanks.

"I tink dey're very dirty, an' a heap more lik' robbin' a hen-house dan scalpin' a sick cat," remarked Shorty.

Shanks in the meantime had singled out the tallest, ugliest, sleepest and dirtiest one, and in a conciliatory voice remarked:

"What tribe Injun from?"

"Pawnee."

"Likee whitley man muchy?" inquired Shanks.

"Humph, gimme ten cents."

"Got many papposes in lodgey?" asked Shanks, as he handed his copper-skinned acquaintance over the requested sum.

"Ugh, so much," replied the Indian, holding up half a dozen fingers.

"Six papposes; good squaw; nice squaw!"

"Me squaw! U—g—h?" demanded the Indian fiercely, winding his grimy and mignon blanket around his dirty, ragged person.

"Y—es. Why a—ain't you a s—squaw, y—you know?" stammered Shanks, while a broad smile commenced to walk up stairs over the faces of the troupe.

"Ugh! me no squaw; me buck, me brave—me Klok! washiki—man who never washes himself!" exclaimed the Indian, strutting around like a turkey.

There was a shout of laughter from the whole troupe, and Shanks, after diving his hands down into his pants' pockets for a minute and staring at his late friend fixedly, remarked:

"And you're rightly named, you flat-headed sheep stealer. Boys, I'm sold; let's go hunt up a shop where they sell iced drinks with straws in them."

Learning that one of Pullman's magnificent palace trains, consisting of sleeping, dining, drawing-room and refrigerator-cars, was leaving that afternoon for San Francisco, Shorty engaged passage for himself and company by it, and a few hours later was rolling over the broad prairie in cars as sumptuously furnished as Fifth Avenue drawing-rooms in New York, while a library and piano graced the drawing-room car, and a bell-cord at your hand summoned neatly-dressed and attentive waiters, who produced a sherry cobbler as if by magic.

"Well, fellers, this tops off any travellin' ever I put in," said Shorty, as he lolled back on one of the handsome sofas, but his energetic, restless little body couldn't keep quiet long, and half an hour later he was sitting with Shanks out on the rear platform smoking and firing with their revolvers at droves of antelopes that galloped off on their approach, an innocent amusement, as the motion of the train prevented a person from takin' anything like aim.

"Much game bagged?" asked Dave Reed, putting his head out of the door.

"You go bag your head," said Shanks.

"I've wounded tw' telegraph poles an' shot a hole thro' an ol' tin tomater can so far," answered Shorty, putting up his pistol and going back into the car in disgust.

What with reading, jeking, singing, playing cards, looking at the wild and grand scenery, firing at the prairie dogs and coyotes along the road, riding on the cowcatcher and platforms, playing pranks on the other passengers and cutting up some mischief all the while, the time slipped around so rapidly that the boys were sorry when their journey was ended, and were wishing it had been twice as long.

All the necessary arrangements for their stay at the Grand Hotel having been made by their advance agent, who met them at the depot and had the troupe speedily transferred bag and baggage to their suite of apartments, where they scraped the dust and dirt of travel off themselves till Shorty swore he had left the biggest half of himself in the bath-tub. After a square American feed Shorty and Shanks took a ramble up Montgomery to Bush Street and inspected the theater.

"It might be bigger, an' I guess we'd find it if we could get up som' fresh gag dat'd tickle der boys," observed Shorty, as he stood on the stage and looked at the rows of empty seats.

"There's a half a dozen big shows running in the city now. I was looking at the posters of the California, Metropolitan, Bella-Union theaters and Maguire's Opera-House, an' they've all got big bills," said Shanks.

"Well, 'n could strike som' bustin' ol' racket, dey'd have ter change dere *big bills* inter fractional currency an' half-dollar shiners 'fore I got thro' wid my show," replied Shorty, leading the way out of the building.

On their way down to the theater they had been beguiled into purchasing half a dozen cabbage-leaf cigars from an almond-eyed Chinaman's stand, the celestial swearing to them in pigeon English that they were pure Havanas.

"Looks very much like a s-e-l-l wid out der use of an eye-glass or telescope," remarked Shorty, as he chuckled away one after another of the cheroots after vain attempts to extract some smoke from them.

"Stuck, and by a pig-tailed Chinaman at that. I'm 'fraid this western air is too much for us," returned Shanks, indignantly.

"Hol' yer breath, pard. I tink I'll patronize dat heathen 'gain," answered Shorty, and dropping into a large toy store on Montgomery Street, he purchased a dozen or so giant fire-crackers and a fuse. Armed with these he returned to Shanks, who was waiting for him outside, and made known his proposed racket, and they started off for the almond-eyed celestial, whom they found calmly blowing the smoke of a cigarette through his nose.

"Ah, Melican man wanty morey cigary good from Havana?" inquired the Chinaman, while a child-like and simple smile stole over his nutmeg-colored mug.

"Looks too innocent to suck eggs," whispered Shanks.

Then turning to the celestial, he signified his desire to purchase some more, providing he was allowed to pick them out. To this the Chinaman at once consented, and Shanks and he stuck their heads over a box, while Shorty hastily, but quietly, affixed the giant crackers to the Oriental's pig-tail and lighted the fuse.

Shanks was busy in the selection of his third cigar when there was an explosion, and the Chinaman's head was jerked back as if he had been lassoed, while a wild, blank look stole into his face.

"Whiz! bang!" went the second cracker, with a report like a small cannon, and again John Chinaman felt his pig-tail fly up in the air and nearly jerk his head off. It was too much. With one scared look around, he clapped his hands to his ears, and darted down the street like a dog with a tin pan tied to his tail, one of the giant crackers exploding every few yards and urging him on to fresh efforts.

"Go it, pig-tail!" yelled Shorty. "Melican man not so much fool as yer picked 'im up ter be."

"Illuminated skyrockets! but ain't he skinning it though? Guess he'd make a match for your bone-yard horse, Shorty," said Shanks, as he held his sides and watched the fast disappearing celestial; and laughing heartily over the racket they proceeded back to the hotel.

The opening performance of the New York Minstrels was well attended, all of the front seats and most of the back ones down stairs being filled by gentlemen, ladies, and their families, while the galleries were packed with the fun-loving boys of San Francisco, gathered to welcome one of whose rackets, scrapes, adventures, and victories they had read and heard so much that they knew him already.

The show took. It was a hit from the rising of the curtain. Everything, as far as it could be given, was fresh and original. The songs were new, and like the stump speeches, written in most cases for the troupe. Each one strove to do well, and succeeded, as the applause of the gratified audience testified. Dave Reed's songs and dances were simply immense, and received well-earned rounds of applause, and yet the boys were not satisfied, though they were pleased with the performance and applauded each actor cheerfully; but no sooner had he bowed himself off the stage, than cries of "Shorty! Shorty!" filled the house.

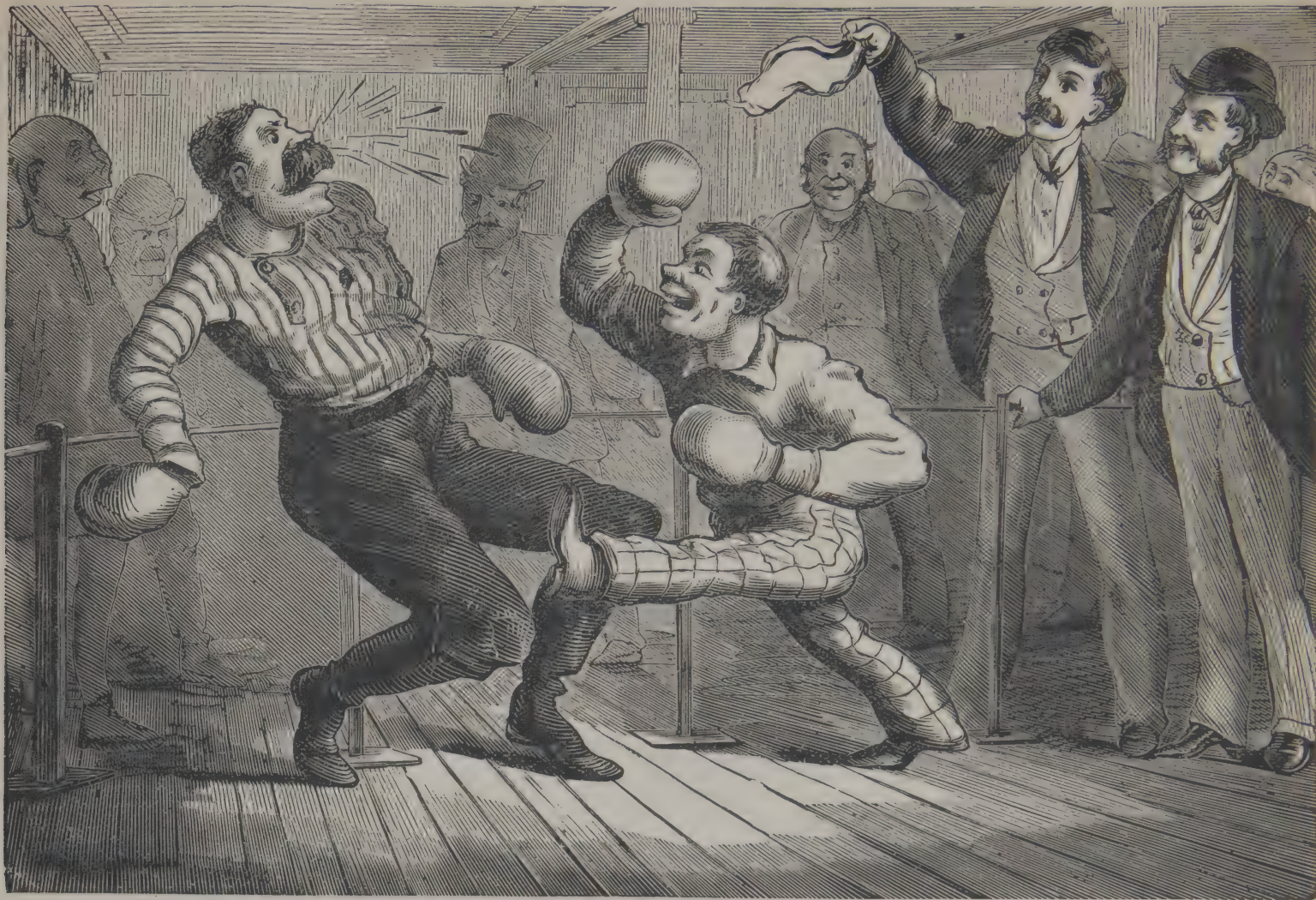
"Well, fellers, I guess I'll go out an' let dem kids hav' a spint at my purty phizicogony, my tall, commandin' figger, my number nine shoes, an' lister ter my loot-like voice," said Shorty, laughingly, as he picked up his banjo, and putting a comical old grin on his funny face, he tripped lightly out and faced his admirers, who sprang to their feet and greeted him with the wildest enthusiasm, and it was a long time before they would let him proceed to play to them.

"Hang de playin'! We only want ter see yer, Shorty, and have yer tell us 'bout de way you warmed dem Milwaukee hams," yelled one of the gamins, and the chorus of "yes, dat's wot we wants," showed he was in the majority, but Shorty only said a few words to them, and then when he had them all quiet and attentive, he grabbed up his banjo and soon sent them into roars of laughter with his comicalities.

The rest of the performance passed off quietly, the boys had seen and heard Shorty and were satisfied, and the curtain dropped on a well-pleased crowd.

"I believe you're just as big a boy to-night as any of them kids that was up in the gallery yelling for you," observed Shanks, as they were fixing up preparatory to leaving the theater.

"Well, I don't kno' but I am; dere's one ting I do kno', an' dat is, dat I wished it could hav' been fixed up 'bove so's I could hav' staid a boy till der las' trumpet toots," replied Shorty, washing the burnt cork off his face.



Shorty leaped forward and put a left-hander on to the other's bugle, drawing the claret and stunning the bully.

"Going straight back to the hotel, or are you game for a spin round 'mongst the lively boys?" inquired Shanks, as they struck the sidewalk.

"I vote for der spin, an' I've game 'nuff for anythin' that weighs less dan a ton, an' don't kick any harder dan a yaller mule," replied Shorty, and they sallied away in search of fun, about as gay and festive a pair of boys as you could pick up between the Atlantic and Pacific.

Their first layout was the Chinese Theater on Jackson Street, where they remained till the clashing cymbals, beating of drums, blowing of trumpets and twenty other kind of noises threatened to deafen them for life, when, on Shorty's suggestion, who had been poisoning himself with several cups of their prepared tea, they made a break.

"Nice gang, dat. Shoot off dere moufs lik' a 'splosion of a powder factory; rather marry a white cat wid a black tail dan one ef dem canary-colored crows," said Shorty, as they struck the sidewalk.

"Shorty, it's a wonder to me you never fell in love with some snug little piece of calico with a pullback and got married," remarked Shanks, thoughtfully.

Shorty made no reply, and a few moments later, as they were passing a sporting kind of a house, run something on the Harry Hill order, he changed the conversation by inviting Shanks to go in with him and see what was going on.

On entering the exhibition-room, after doing the requisite at the outside bar, they found the room set out with tables, which were about two-thirds filled with a half-maudlin crowd of young sports, who were being waited on by a dozen or so female western beer jerkers. The center of the room was a ring in which sports in striped shirts and boxing-gloves pelted each other till one was satisfied.

Shorty and Shanks took a table by themselves, and having ordered some soda cocktails and the best cigars in the house, were watching the sport, when a low, thick-set rough at the next table looked over and sneered:

"How long since they commenced letting dirty-nosed runts into this shebang?"

Shorty lifted his glass to hurl it, but Shanks caught his arm, and raising himself up to his full height, he with one stride placed himself alongside the speaker and seizing him by the ear, he whispered in a voice hoarse with passion, at the insult his little chum had received:

"Another word of lip to my friend, you loafer, and I'll mash you worse than a bunch of squeezed grapes."

The fellow, who was taken so by surprise that he was riveted to his seat, glanced up at Shanks' long

muscular figure, his pale and determined face, and weakened with a growl of:

"Why don't he travel with his mammy if he ain't able to fight for himself?"

"Tank yer, pard; I knowed yer'd do it, like der brick dat yer are; but yer needn't minded; I can, an' am goin' ter get away wid dat hog 'fore I leave here," said Shorty, extending his hand to his partner, and grasping his with a grip that showed their friendship lay deeper than words.

"Look out, gent'men; that's Bully McGuffin that runs the hoodlum gang," whispered the waitress, as she laid the drinks and cigars on the table.

"Don't yer fret, sis; we'll look out; but der hoodlums 'll want anoder capt'n ter-morrer, 'n ain't mistaken," replied Shorty, coolly.

"Is there anybody in the audience would like to put on the gloves?" asked the manager of ceremonies, after a bout.

"I don't keer if I stick them on, if there's any feller wants his mug flattened," said Bully McGuffin, throwing off his surplus clothes and strutting into the ring, where no one seemed likely to tackle him.

"Now where's my meat?" he demanded in his corner loafer style, as he looked around the audience for a victim.

"I don't mind bein' knocked roun' a little, an' we'll talk more 'bout dat meat bizness arter we're done," answered Shorty, getting up and handing his things to Shanks, who accepted his trust as second, only whispering:

"If he licks yer, pard, I'll chaw him up into mince pie meat and feed him to the dogs."

"Oh, I don't fight boys," sneered Bully.

"Yer've got ter fight, or I'll kick der hull top of yer head off," said Shorty, sternly, stepping over the ring ropes and taking his gloves.

"Oh, well, if you want to be spanked and sent home crying to your mammy I'll do it for you in short time. I guess you don't know though that I'm Bully McGuffin of the Hoodlums."

"Yer look like a bully or a convict," said Shorty, giving a sign to Shanks that he was all ready.

"Time!" called the manager.

At the word they both stepped forward and stood facing each other, and the great difference in the pair was clearly and plainly noticeable. Bully McGuffin loomed up a couple of heads over his little antagonist, and his fat round figure looked as if he could seize and crush his pigmy adversary in his grasp. Shorty, with a cool, contemptuous smile upon his face, one foot a little in rear of the other, and his short, muscular little body square to the front, stood looking his man fair and plump in the eyes.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, watch the elephant gobble up the frog," said Bully, making a strike at Shorty, which the latter ducked and avoided, and before the latter could recover his guard he had leaped forward and put a right and left-hander with all his might on to the other's bugle, drawing the claret and stunning the bully.

"Bully for the bantam, I say, and I don't care if the whole hoodlum gang hears me," said a gentlemanly young fellow who stood in Shank's corner.

"Darn his infernal picture! I'll warm him for that," exclaimed Bully, making a rush at Shorty and crowding him back by force of brute strength.

"Didn't get a crack in on me wid all his pokin'; I'll lick 'em, pard, or my name's not Shorty," said our little hero, as he sat on Shank's knee to get his breath.

"An' I'll bet an' even hundred you lick him if I get licked myself by the hoodlums," said the young sport behind Shanks.

"Time!"

This time the buny evidently meant to force the fighting, overpower Shorty by his strength, and wind up the match at once, but he changed his mind somewhat when Shorty stood his ground, warded off two or three fearful blows aimed at him, caught one on the shoulder, and then jumping in, pommelled Bully's face with a one, two sledge-hammer cracks that drove that fellow into his corner with a hurry.

"Bully, bully, and bully again! You've got him licked, chum, or I'm a grasshopper!" exclaimed Shanks, and he was right, for the bully, unbuttoning his gloves, muttered:

"I didn't come here to fight professionals. I thought this was an amateur put up."

There was a wild cheer and a filling up of glasses, shaking of hands, congratulations and enthusiasm for our little hero, for Bully McGuffin's reign of terror was now broken, and he slunk from the hall like a dog in dog days, with his tail between his legs.

"Little fellow, the best in the house is yours to call for," said the proprietor, coming forward, smilingly, to where Shorty was putting on his coat; but our little hero refused everything but a wash, and departed with Shanks without being the worse by a scratch.

"I knowed he hadn't der backbone to stan' squar' up an' tak' it rite an' lef'," observed Shorty, as they made their way back to the hotel.

"I'm too proud to say 'boo' to a goose if we met one. You licked him so quick, an' all the way through at that, that I feel like climbing up on the top of some of these church steeples and yelling 'Hurrah for my pard!'" answered Shanks, enthusiastically.

"Pshaw! dat warn't nuthin' ter get 'way wid dog

call. Dat's only child's play," said Shorty, and coming to their hotel, they struck out for their rooms and retired.

It turned out that amongst the crowd who had witnessed Shorty's prowess was a reporter, and the next morning all San Francisco was reading an account of "How a Bully Became a Mouse."

Talk about your full houses, talk about your crowds, your jams! The surging, crushing pack of people that besieged and occupied aisles and every foot of sitting or standing room in, or anywhere near the Alhambra Theater for the rest of that week, looked to an outsider, as if they wanted to carry the building by storm, rather than a party of people struggling to pay their way to see a performance. Shorty, of course, was tickled to death. Full houses he was bound to have, if there were a hundred other counter attractions running in the city.

His reception every night was a perfect ovation—the boys up stairs howling for him till they were hoarse. "The boy that got away with Bully McGuffin," was a war cry that would start round after round of cheers from Shorty's youthful admirers. Nor was it confined to the boys; the respectable and working class hailed his victory as one of law, order and pluck over outlawry, bullying and brutality, and joined the boys in their tribute of cheers, till the old building fairly trembled beneath their applause, when Shorty would come smiling before them.

"Well, pard, how does the crowd suit you now? There wasn't room for a ratan walking-cane to stand up on tiptoes in the house to-night," remarked Shanks, on the evening after their visit to the boxing-saloon.

"It's der biggest jam ever I struck. Now, yer see, I tol' yer dat der bulidin' might be big 'nuff for any old gang of burnt corks but der New Yorkers, but dem boys can fill der biggest show-houses in der country if yer only give dem half a show for der white siley," answered Shorty, smilingly.

"How long are you going to stick it out here?" asked Shanks, after a pause.

"Well, yer see, dat all 'pends on circumstances. If things works O K, we may ring up der curtain for another week; but I can't tell from where I sit preactly," replied Shorty, as they turned into the hotel, ordered cooling drinks and cigars sent to their rooms, and took the elevator up.

"Well, pard, here's to you and the new York Minstrels, and may they long stick together and prosper," was the toast proposed by Shanks half an hour later, as he opened a bottle of iced champagne and filled two glasses with the sparkling wine.

"Yes, dey're as square as a lot of fellers as I eber struck; none of yer snide, hamfatin' gang 'bout dem, an' dey know dere biz up ter der handle, every pop; so I'll join yer heart an' hand in dat toast, chum," answered Shorty.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHORTY and Shanks we find in the smoking-room, the former engaged in fixing a paper fool's-cap on a countryman, who has fallen asleep in one of the chairs, and whose face has been already adorned with a violet ink mustache and pair of side whiskers.

"Dere," said Shorty, as he plucked a few feathers from a duster and stuck them in the sleeper's hat. "Al Kickabud sneezum," as der Turks say, which, in Yankee talk, means, "Dara my buttons, but yer'd mak' a better sultan dan yer would a 'tater-bug nasher;" an' I hope yer get der nomernation an' get lecked."

"I think if he wakes up he'll elect us for to get our heads punched," remarked Shanks, who was standing by the open window dropping peanut shells into a tooth-powder man's tray on the sidewalk below.

"I wish I'd some way of painting the pacha's nose a light, tasty green," regretted Shorty, standing back and looking at the sleeper artistically.

"He'll paint your eyes black and blue, if he finds out who frescoed him."

"I'd risk all dat I'd only had a couple of little flags ter stick behind his ears, an' a drum ter hang 'round der Turk's neck," chuckled Shorty.

"Keep straight on with your infernal work, if you think there's nary a hereafter. Why can't you be guileless and innocent like me?" asked Shanks, as he leaned out a little and adroitly flipped a peanut square into the mouth of an old citizen, who was getting his teeth experimented upon.

The advent of the peanut set him off into a violent fit of coughing, on recovering from which he immediately set to, kicked the tray of tooth-powder into the gutter, and hammered the professor till he looked as if he'd been run through a thrashing-machine.

"Let's mosey somewhere. Hanged if I don't believe my legs'd take to growing longer if I didn't give them something else to do," proposed Shanks, who had dodged back out of sight when the professor began to explain the sad peanut affair.

"Whither, most noble duke, would'st lead this ban-tan?" asked Shorty.

"There, that piebald snoozing friend of yours is going to wake up and we'll both get duked out of here on our starboard ears," said Shanks.

"Dyvel! a drop of danger; der Turk slumbereth lik' a prize twenty pound baby with a moist nose. Now, wher'd yer want to hoof it ter?" answered Shorty.

"We can ride, if you'd rather."

"Too dusty."

"Well, how are you on a spin to the Golden Gate, and a dinner at the Cliff House?"

"I ain't on dat layout, pard; legs ain't built 'nuff lik' a camel's ter mak' a tramping of me."

"There's the Mission Dolores, with its California wine, won't that tempt you?"

"Dat's a shorter ways, an' dat mak's it better. Come on, I'll go down dere wid yer an' we can stop an' hav' a look at my ole skinny nag," said Shorty, and the pair started out, leaving the countryman in his war paint still sweetly sleeping.

"By the way, how's the boneyard getting along?" asked Shanks, as they stopped at the cigar-stand and refilled their cases.

"Thinner, sleeper, an' wuss-lookin' dan eber."

"Good heavens! why he'll pass for a phantom if he gets any thinner," exclaimed Shanks.

"Der only ting I see 'fraid of is dat 'f he gets any thinner dere won't be nuthin' ter hang der harness on," laughed Shorty.

"Come 'long, little one, and let's have a squint at him for luck," suggested Shanks, and the pair started down Market Street, laughing and talking.

They had only gone a few blocks when a large, fat woman suddenly turned the corner of Dupont Street, stopped, gazed fixedly at Shorty for a moment, and then, with a scream, rushed forward, and catching him in her arms, exclaimed:

"My husband!"

"Lem'me go, darn it!" yelled Shorty, writhing to free himself from her embraces.

"Oh, my darling, to think that I should find you here," shrieked the woman, lifting him up in her strong, stout arms.

"Gosh hang it to thunder! leggo me, can't yer!" moaned Shorty, turning his head from side to side to prevent being kissed.

"Let go my own Shorty, my sweet husband, never! never! never!" she shrieked, holding him closer to her than ever.

"Lem'me down, confound der cursed luck ter blazes!" bawled our little hero.

"Oh, Shorty, why did you forsake me?" she moaned, putting him down on his feet.

"Forsake der devil! Der best ting for yer is ter climb away an' lem'me 'lone," shouted Shorty, angrily.

"Leave you, my Shorty! Not without they tear me from you with wild horses!" she cried, holding fast to his arm, while the crowd who had assembled urged her on by shouting:

"Bully for the old gal!"

"Go home with your mammy, little fellow!"

"Take him up and spank him!"

"What's he been doing, playing hooky?"

"Golly, won't the ole woman warm him when she gets him 'ome!"

"Guess he must 'av' runned away!"

"See here, woman, you want to clear out and leave my friend alone," interrupted Shanks, who had been standing like one petrified till now.

"Your friend! I guess, young man, you don't know that he's my own true husband," snapped the woman, so tartly that Shanks staggered back.

"Husband fiddlesticks! He ain't any more married than I am. You've got hold of the wrong hairpin this time," said Shanks, recovering himself.

"That's all you know about it, you long-legged crane! I've got my marriage lines in my bosom here, Mr. Smarty."

"Oh, o-h!" groaned Shorty.

"Impossible, you're a female fraud," kept on Shanks.

"Am I? I'll show you, you snipe, you, r f I am."

"Go 'way, woman, an' I'll pay yer big," whispered Shorty.

"Leave you now, before I've been with you an hour. Never, love!"

"Waltz yer boy home by the ear!" advised the crowd.

"Come, hubby, you'll go 'long with your little wifey, won't yer?" she said, lifting Shorty along by the arm in spite of his endeavors to get free.

"Here, drop that!" yelled Shanks, grabbing him by the other arm and pulling back.

"Police! police! help!" yelled the woman, and a moment later a burly, red-faced cop broke through the crowd and snatching hold of the bone of contention, in the person of Shorty, demanded in an authoritative and pompous voice to know the trouble.

"It's my husband, Shorty, that run away from me in New York seven years ago, and I want him arrested and taken before a judge!" screamed the big woman.

"I want that woman arrested for assaulting my friend on the street," said Shanks.

"You keep your mouth shut; I'm going to take this little sneak up to the judge. I'll see whether he'll refuse the police free tickets to his old show," sneered the cop, insultingly, as he grasped Shorty by the collar.

"Drop him!" said Shanks, sternly.

"I'll drop you," threatened the peeler, drawing his club and aiming a blow at Shanks, while the crowd groaned at his cowardly effort to club an unarmed and quiet man.

"Clubs ain't trumps just yet," exclaimed Shanks, and swinging himself around lightly he lifted the cop a clip under the ear that rolled him into the gutter, and made him think a house had fallen on him.

Shorty and Shanks attempted to escape, but the

arrival of half a dozen more policemen prevented them, and they found themselves in custody, and a few moments later were marched off before Judge Squelchum.

"Hey! hey! what's all this mean?" demanded his honor, waking up from a nap, as the prisoners, woman, officers and crowd poured into his court-room.

The court having wiped his judicial eyes, blew his judicial nose, crossed his judicial legs and put on his judicial look, declared himself as ready to lend his judicial ears to the case, so the cops filed up in turn, told the little they knew and considerable they didn't know; the fellow who had been knocked into the gutter showed the lump behind his ear and identified Shanks as his knocker. Then the big woman had a show to say her little say, and in a harsh, strained voice, she said:

"Oh, judge, dear, it's my own husband I want."

"Your what?" asked the judge, glancing from her two hundred and ninety pounds avoirdupois to Shorty's diminutive figure.

"My husband, your honor," she answered, and unbuttoning her dress she produced a worn and soiled paper, which she handed to the judge.

"Ah—um—let me see. Is your name Shorty, young man?" asked the judicial voice, while the judicial eyes peered over the top of his spectacles.

"You bet, an' it's der first time ever I was 'shamed of it," answered Shorty, slowly.

"Then you married this woman in New York seven years since, as set forth in this marriage certificate?"

"Not dat I knows on, jedge."

"But here's your signature."

"If yer see a hoof mark in der sand dat ain't a hoss."

"No comparisons, sir. How do you account for this certificate?" inquired the judicial voice, sternly.

"Well, I'll tell yer, jedge, all 'bout der job dat was put on me, an' dey played it fine, yer bet. Yer see I was in New York wid a snide gang I used ter trabel wid, when I got separated from dem some way an' struck out on a racket of my own. Well, dere was a feller dat pertended he run a show, an' seen' I had a dead load of sugar, he got me full, and dat was der las' I remember. Der nex' mornin' when I woke up I found dat ol' cow der in der room, my money gone, an' she claimin' ter be my wifey; but I lit out when she was down cookin' breakfast, struck der gang, an' we left New York dat nite; dat was der fust and las' I ever seed of her till she snatched me bald-headed ter-day on der street. I was so 'shamed of der hull 'fair dat I neber tol' a livin' creature of it," explained Shorty, speaking so earnestly and honestly that his words carried the mark of truth upon them.

"Do you deny the marriage, then?" asked the judicial mouth.

"I dun'no nuthin' 'bout it, jedge; she kidnapped me an' played her cards from der top an' bottom jest, as she chose."

"Have you any other proof of the marriage, woman?" asked the judicial mind, brightening up suddenly.

"Yes, your honor. I have his son here," and switching around her skirts, she thrust her hand into what appeared to be an immense pocket, lifted out and set upon the judicial bench one of nature's queerest phenomena.

"Great heavens! what's that?" gasped the judge, starting back and gazing at the object with eyes that were ready to jump from their sockets.

"Ise Shorty, Junior, boss," chirped the dwarf.

"A child of mine!" groaned Shorty.

"Dat's what's der matter, dad—got any fine counterbaker handy, I'll tak' a chaw wid yer?" lisped the young imp, looking coolly around.

He was a most remarkable-looking specimen of humanity, reminding one of the pictures of fairies we have seen in books; though fully six years of age, and perfectly formed, he was scarcely a foot high, and weighed less pounds than he was years old. Mentally he was very bright, keen and precocious, knowing as much as boys twice his age and four times his size. Such was the wonderful chick that presented himself before his paternal and Judge Squelchum.

"And—and this—this—thing is his son?" stammered the judicial potato trap, when he had half way regained his composure.

"Yes, it is, your honor, and the Lord only knows the trouble and heartaches the imp has given me with his tricks and capers. Why, there's not a living thing but the brat can mock and imitate, and he knows all the circusing and trash in the world," whined his maternal, wringing her hands.

"He's been a good deal of trouble to you, then, has he?"

"Oh, the full of the world, yer honor, bad luck to the whiffet!"

"Cheese it, ole woman; don't give us away too bad," broke in the tiny youth, putting his two thumbs in his ears and braying like a mule.

"Silence! you—you—whatever you are," commanded Squelchum.

"Dumb as a drum wid a hole in it, ole sassafrax," said the dwarf.

"Goodness 'live! what a remarkable—ah—creature," exclaimed the judge, while the crowd in the court-room went off into broad guffaws of laughter.

"Then, maybe, as long as he's so much trouble to you, you wouldn't mind transferring him to his father's care," suggested the judicial mind, brightening up again.

"I'll tak' 'im, jedge, an' pay her solid for all der trouble he's ever been ter her," said Shorty, whose



Chip, how's tings?" said Shorty. "Lovely, der goose hangs high," came from the bottle, and the audience roared with laughter.

heart and feelings had jumped out toward the little shaver from the moment he had heard him speak and looked in his comical little face, in which, without a doubt, could be traced his own features.

"Oh, no, your honor, the heartaches he gave me only made him the dearer to me. Why, it would seem like parting with all the world if you took him from me," sobbed the big, fat woman, who saw a big stake of money ahead, and determined to make the most of it.

"Say, ol' flip-flops, ain't dis chick got no say in dis jawin' match; 'kase 'fi 'ave I vote for der ol' man, an' let ol' petticoats go ter thunder," broke in Shorty, Junior (for such we shall call him after this), jumping up on the judge's desk and facing his honor.

"Great Moses! what a wonderful phenomenon! This exceeds anything in my whole judicial experience," exclaimed the judicial mouthpiece, while the judicial specs tumbled off in his amazement at being thus addressed by the tiny specimen before him.

"Shut up your sass, you brat, and come back here into my pocket, you imp!" snarled the woman, and her voice grated like a wagon wheel going over oyster shells.

"Keep yer han's off. I'se under der purteeshun of der law," yelled Shorty, Junior, and, snatching up a ruler that lay on the desk, he hit her a sharp rap across the knuckles, that caused the audience to roar and cheer, the judge to stare, Shorty to laugh and his maternal to draw back her hand and suck her knuckles.

"Merciful angels protect me! Coke, Blackstone and Middleton don't give me any light on such a wonderful case," said the judicial fountain head. "I'll have to dismiss this case believing that you will come to some amicable settlement if left to yourselves; in the meantime, as the child expresses a desire to remain with the father, I must award him the custody of him."

"Then you won't make him pay me, you old beak, you?" yelled the woman, shaking her fist savagely at his judicial nibbs.

"Officers, remove that woman," commanded the judicial voice, and Mrs. S— was hustled out into the open air, after plucking the collar and scratching the face of one cop, and removing three handfuls of hair, biting the arm and tearing the coat off the other officer.

"Judge, I'm 'bliged ter yer for yer fair play in dis game, an' if eber Shorty can do yer a squar deal, jess yer call on 'im an' yer won't find yerself talkin' ter a wooden man dat'll go back on his word. As for der kid, I'll take jess as good keer of 'im as I will of myself, an' a blamed site better. I ain't much of a camp

meetin' howler but I tries all my mite an' main ter do der squar ting by all der boys," explained Shorty.

"Dat's der plate of ice-cream dat dis spoon fits," observed Shorty, Junior, ramming his hands down in his little pant's pockets and looking at his dad.

"Den I can get up an' slide out, I s'pose?" inquired Shorty, taking his tiny boy on his arm and moving towards the door.

"Judge, you're a brick, a real Philadelphia red-faced, hard-burnt, first-class brick," remarked Shanks, about to follow.

"Not so fast, young man; it'll cost you a ten-dollar fine for hitting a policeman in the discharge of his duty," said the judicial tongue, wisely.

"Pay it, and think it's blamed cheap. Tell you what I'll do; I'll put up ten dollars more a lick for a clip at them other bloats that marched us in," chuckled Shanks, tossing out a tenner and following his friend.

Just as they struck the sidewalk they were met by Mrs. S., who had been employing her time since her ejection in drinking kill-me-quick gin, and cursing San Francisco judges.

"Yer com' rite 'long wid me, woman. I want ter hav' one squar' talk ter yer for der fust an' las' time. Say, Shanks, ol' chum, I wish yer'd com' 'long as witness, if yer will," said Shorty, taking his friend's arm and leading the way into a large restaurant, with rooms up stairs.

"Well, what do you propose to do for me, Mr. Shorty?" "If you don't come down heavy with the sugar I'll hang around, annoy and disgrace you till you die!" threatened the woman, seating herself at a table and glaring at Shorty.

"Tumble ter yerself, woman; button up yer mouth an' giv' yer ears a chance. In der fust place I don't skare, or yer can't bluff me wuth a red cent. If yer tries any of yer shenanagen games I'll histe yer inter jail so quick dat it'll make yer head swim, savvy dat? Now, I'se goin' ter do der squar' ting by yer, an' yer can 'cept it or leave it 'lone, jess as yer choose. Yer get up an' get out of dis place an' never cum near, speak or write ter either der boy or me, or let us see yer face an' I'll give yer two thousand dollars down in cash, an' I'll put up five hundred in a bank in New York every year for yer. What d'yer say?" said Shorty, slowly and sternly.

The woman's eyes fairly danced with joy at the amount, which was much larger than she had expected; but the next moment her cupidity drowned out the glad look, and she grated:

"Make it three thousand down and a thousand a year."

"Not one nickle more; take it or do yer worst," answered Shorty, firmly.

"Give me der money, cuss yer!" she hissed.

"Sign dat fust," said Shorty, handing her a paper which Shanks had been drawing up, and which set forth her sworn word to keep away forever more from them.

Having signed, Shorty drew her up a check for two thousand and passed it to her with the remark:

"An' now let's part in peace; good-bye."

"Cuss and cuss and cuss you again and again, and the devil take you and your impish brat," swore the woman, as she pocketed the check and started for the door.

"Gib me a lock of her hair: cut off her toe-nails, an' lem'me smell an onion," called out Shorty, Junior scrambling up on the table and striking into a clog dance.

The next moment the door slammed and they were alone.

"Put it dere, little one. I've been sorry for the racket you went thro', but I couldn't help you to save my life. I did think of swearing she was my grandmother once, but I was 'fraid it wouldn't work," remarked honest old Shanks, extending his hand to his little friend.

"Don't yer say a word, pard; yer stuck ter me lik' a porous plaster, you game ol' bird, an' knocked a peeler inter der gutter same as a mule had kicked 'im, an' I won't forget dese tings in a hurry. I only wish'd yer had as many wives as Brigham Young, so's yer could see me glue myself ter yer side. Now I'se don' more palaverin' an' chinnin' dan I've done 'fore in a long time; let's get somethin' ter drink," said Shorty, shaking his chum's hand warmly.

"Mine's goin' ter be a lemonade sour, wid a couple of strawberries in it," chimed in the kid.

Shorty looked at Shanks for a moment, then both burst into a hearty fit of laughter, and it ended in the boy getting his lemonade.

"I don't s'pose there's any use in our trying to hush this affair up, there was so confounded many present that'd carry it to every corner of the city!" said Shanks, as they sipped their drinks.

"Nary a bit. I've jest got ter face der music an' listen ter der band play. Dat don't 'mount ter nothin' so long as I feel dat I'm rid of dat woman foreber," answered Shorty, and having finished their drinks, a few moments later, they returned to the hotel and went at once to their rooms.

"Now look a yere, kid, I'm goin' ter take charge of yer from dis out, an' do der right ting by yer, but I want yer to cram into yer head one ting, an' dat is yer got ter mind me from der word go. I ain't goin'

ter be hard on yer, an' I'm goin' ter learn yer der show bizness, but yer got ter walk a chalk line wid me, or yer'll think dere's been an earthquake round yer," remarked Shorty to his son, who had seated himself on a cigar box on the table and was squinting around the room.

"It's a go, dad," he answered.

That afternoon Shorty sent out for one of the leading tailors, and, after ordering an outfit for Shorty, Junior, he took him to a costumer's, who took his measure for a complete stage wardrobe, including costumes of all nations, one suit to be ready by that evening.

Shorty's adventure had become the town talk, and hundreds who had had no idea of attending flocked that night to the Alhambra Theater just to see how Shorty would conduct himself, so that long before the curtain rose the building was jammed from pit to roof.

"Bet a hundred 'cases' that he hasn't got the nerve to face an audience like this after what happened him this morning," said a large military-looking man in one of the front seats.

"I'll see that hundred, Captain Jinks, and raise you five hundred better that he'll show up in time. Why, that Shorty's got more backbone and grit than half a dozen spines like yours'd make. Do you hear me warbling?" spoke up the young fellow who had offered to back Shorty in the boxing match.

"Wish'd he'd only tol' one of us fellers dat dey war goin' ter put a snide an' dirty job up on 'im an' dere'd been 'nuff of us bootblack an' hoss-holdin' gang layin' 'round loose ter 'ave laid out der cops, muzzled der ol' woman an' cleaned out der court in less time dan a cat can lick 'er kittens," remarked a ragged, smutty-nosed bootblack, in the gallery.

"Yer rite, Freckles, dere'd been a riot, you bet," said another, on the opposite side of the house, and the cheer of approval with which the sentiment was treated showed how warmly the boys felt towards their old friend.

The curtain was rung up, and the performance run along smoothly and nicely, the fun-provoking gags all being caught up on the fly by the audience and laughed at, while the numerous hits all received a liberal tribute of applause.

Everything passed off in this manner till it came time for Shorty's appearance, when the outside curtain suddenly dropped, leaving the audience in a ferment of excitement.

"He's backed out!"

"Haddn't the nerve!"

"Got weak in the knees!"

"Fraid to show up!" yelled the crowd; but, even as they spoke, up went the curtain, and there, square before them, standing by a small table, on which rested a large glass bottle, containing a tiny doll-like figure, stood Shorty, dressed in a magician's suit of black velvet covered with spangles, and smiling out upon the sea of faces before him with that cool, comical grin upon his funny old face.

"Tree cheers an' a 'Frisco bulldog for Shorty, der gamest boy out!" proposed a ragged urchin, climbing up on to his seat and waving his torn and peakless cap around his uncombed head, and they were given with such a vim that people blocks away thought a riot had broken out.

"Tank yer, boys, for I kno' dat yer mean it," said Shorty, stepping forward and bowing, and then resuming his place by the table he continued: "Ladies an' gents, I want ter 'zibit ter yer der mos' remarkable phenomenon dat was eber presented 'fore an audience in dis 'roun' world of ourn. Dis bottle imp has der power of action, voice an' motions of any one of us. Jess pry open yer ears an' I'll speak ter 'im," and, putting his mouth to the bottle, he hailed:

"Hello, Chip, how's tings?"

"Eberytin's lovely an' der goose hangs high," came out from the bottle, while the audience roared with laughter to see the creature get up and stretch himself in the glass coffin and then quietly seat himself again.

"A very clever combination of mechanism and ventriloquism," said a gentleman, who was in one of the private boxes, and who had been watching Shorty's performance closely.

"Yer tink dat dat's mechanism do yer?" asked Shorty, who, as well as half the house had heard the remark, as it was meant they should.

"Don't think anything about it; I'm sure of it," answered the other, who was a prominent politician and well-known character around the city.

"An' dat der voice was ventriloquism?"

"Positive of it; you can't easily deceive me with your puppets," answered the man, dictatorially.

"Ter convince dis gentleman, an' ter amuse der res' of my friends in der audience, I'll remove der bottle an' let yer see dat it's neither ventriloquism or mechanism. Boys an' folkses, lemme interjuce ter yer my son, Shorty Junior, who, I trust, yer will always use as well as yer 'ave his dad," said Shorty, removing the bottle, which proved to have no bottom, and lifting the tiny chick of a fellow down on to the floor.

"I ain't so awful big, fellers, but I've a hunky rat on der sun, an' a gallus boy for a lark," spoke the kid, trotting forward to the footlights, and looking coolly around.

"That takes my hat," exclaimed the politician in the box, while a kid in the gallery scrambled up and yelled in a shrill voice that caught every ear in the immense crowd:

"Tree more cheers for Shorty; and, fellers, le's giv'

tree times tree for Shorty Junior, an' 'f he's only up ter his dad he'll mak' a hummer."

The newsboy's proposed cheers were given with a will, the whole grand audience standing up and opening their mouths to let the sound ring out, and the curtain fell upon a scene of the wildest enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE left our friends, Shorty and Shorty, Junior, at the Alhambra Theater after the introduction and enthusiastic reception of the latter by the boys of San Francisco.

"The boy's made a hit, pard, and, mark my words, he's going to prove the trump card in our New York Minstrel deck. He's sharper than chain lightning or a bunch of razors tied up with blue ribbon; cooler thaniced cucumber in July, and fuller of mischief than seventeen monkeys," remarked Shanks, as Shorty and himself sat in the smoking-room enjoying a good-night cigar before going up to bed.

"Ye-es, he's sharp 'nuff, an' 'twont be his dad's fault 'f he don't waitz ter der front; but den yer kno' some kids is born to be rustlers, an' dey makes tings howl from der cradle till dey're ready ter pass in dere checks; and dere's oders dat's born ter be clams, an' der mud sticks fas' ter dem all der lives," replied Shorty, glancing over to the sofa, where he had left his boy asleep, and starting up on finding him missing.

"Well, what's the kickup now?" inquired Shanks, looking inquisitively at him.

"The kid's gone. I laid 'im down dere 'sleep when we com' in," answered Shorty, anxiously.

"Gone! Let's go look for him at once. He must have got up and have walked away in his sleep," said Shanks, springing to his feet, and the pair hurried out into the hall in time to see Shorty, Junior, coming tearing towards them seated astride of an immense Newfoundland dog belonging to the hotel.

"Hey! look out there, boy, where you're going," exclaimed Shanks, as he saw the dog come boiling towards him.

"Clar' der trac' when the bulgine's out!" yelled Shorty, Junior, throwing his arms around the dog's neck, while the latter, darting between Shanks' long legs, upset him in a mixed-up heap on the floor.

"I was mistaken when I said he'd walked away in his sleep. I should have said he'd ridden away," remarked Shanks, getting up and looking over his shoulder to get a glimpse of the extent of damages.

"It's confounded rough dat der kid gib yer der flop; but ha, ha, ha! it was too funny for anything" ter see yer kickin' up yer heels at der ceiling, while der dog an' boy scooted 'long 's 'f nothin' had happened," said Shorty, leaning back against the wall and laughing heartily.

"Yee-up, very funny, I s'pose," said Shanks, very gravely, as he inspected a foot-long rip in the rear of his clothing.

"Oh, Lord! I'll split myself laughin' 'f you don't stop!" shouted Shorty, going off into fresh peals of laughter as he caught the mournful expression of his chum's face.

"If you have any idea of making a bare-backed circus rider out of him I'll guarantee success from the word go," observed Shanks, and they started off in the direction the boy and dog had taken, encountering people every few yards, who were picking themselves up and indulging in fireproof language in reference to a dog and monkey that had collided with them a few minutes before.

"See them! see the d—, man! if you had them take your legs from under you, roll you seven times over on a dirty floor, knock out your false ceth, carry away your wig, ruin your new ten-dollar hat and chuckle at you as they rushed away I guess you'd see all you wanted to of them!" exclaimed an old gentleman, of whom they made some inquiries.

At the next turn a darkey waiter was found seated in a general smash-up of crockery and a late supper.

"Did yer slip, Sambo?" asked Shorty.

"No, sah, no slip. Just as Ise was coming long de passage wid de jemmens' supper 'long com' a big dog wid de debble on his back, scooted de legs from under dis chile, an' de nex' ting I knowed dere was a smash an' dis coon foun' hisself squatted jess 'ere, boss," exclaimed the darkey, looking wistfully around at the smash up.

"Sure it was der devil, be yer?" asked Shorty, laughing as he saw the mixture of fried eggs, darkey, oysters, astonishment, broken dishes and fear that were scattered around.

"Shuah, sah; he com' a flyin' 'long 'bout as big as a doll, sah, an' when he seed dis darkey rolling round in der broken dishes, he jes grinned an' scooted egs sah," answered the waiter, getting up and wiping some of the yellow egg off his black face.

"Here, boy, 'ere's somefin' ter pay for yer bruise an' der mash of crockery," laughed Shorty, as he slipped a five into the darkey's hand and hurried on.

"Dundervetter! Gott in himm! I go right end mid dis 'ouse!" moaned a voice, and as they turned into a side passage they came across a corpulent Teuton sprawling at full length on the floor, while Shorty, Junior, and the dog could be seen bounding away in the distance.

"What's the trouble, Sourkrout! Been seeing the

circus riders, same as I was?" asked Shanks, sympathetically.

"Doubles, you pet? Shust as I gom along dot hall a pig tog mid a tyie of a ding on id's pack run under me mit ids head un frowed me mid der ground ker splang!" answered the Teuton, scrambling to his feet and looking wildly around to see if any trace of his late enemy was in sight.

"Oh, p'shaw! I guess yer must 'ave slipped on somethin' an' sot down," observed Shorty, and he was passing on when the corpulent and excited Teuton grabbed him by the arm and said:

"Mein friendt, atshop a leedle dill I dalk der you mid mine moudt. You dinks ven von dings runs in und frows mine legs vide open, so dot dat ish vot you call shlippin'."

"No, dat's what dey callskatin', Dutchy," answered Shorty.

"So—I hear me 'pout dot ding skadin', put de nex' feller dot ox me der skade I shust preak un peer glass ober his head," soliloquized the Teuton, as he moved slowly and sadly away.

At the end of the corridor, Shorty, Junior, and his charger were captured and taken prisoners.

"What kind of a racket is dis yer've been puttin' up on me?" asked his paternal, as he lifted him up in his arms and tried to speak sternly, but the twinkle in his eye, and the wrinkles of laughter around his mouth, showed that he was thinking of his own youthful pranks.

"Oh, dad, 'f yer knew what a scrumptious hoss he made, an' yer could 'ave seen der nig wid der dishes slammun' ober on his ear an' hollerin' for der debbel ter let 'im 'lone dis time yer'd split," chirped Shorty, Junior, cuddling himself up cosily in his paternal's arms.

The mirthful wrinkles around Shorty's mouth deepened into a broad grin, and the youngster knew he was forgiven, and returning to their rooms they soon after retired.

"Anything fresh on the carpet for to-day?" asked Shanks, the next morning, as the trio sat eating their breakfast in their own rooms.

"Nothin' 'ticular. I'm goin' ter take a spin down ter see how Barebones is pannin' out; did I tell yer dat I'd entered 'im for der Grand Occidental Fall Meetin'. Dere's twenty of der Pacific highlanders goin' ter put in dere best licks for der ten thousand dollars, an' I'm just fool an' sassy 'nuff ter tink dat Barebones can skin der lot of dem. I've got one of der best jocks from der east ter train 'im, an' he tells me he can jess everlastingly get over aer ground," answered Shorty.

"F-h-e-w!" whistled Shanks, "and who are you going to get to ride him?"

"Dat's jess der trouble; Barebones, yer see, can't carry der weight of a man jock wid der same chances of pullin' thro'."

"None of the boys that could straddle him, is there?"

"Nary one dat knows how ter straddle a turtle."

"Couldn't you ride him yourself?" asked Shanks.

"Der trouble 'bout dat is, I don't want der crowd ter tumble ter it, bein' der same lay out dat scooped der Chicago folks in. I've had der ol' hoss clipped, an' a false tail tied on, an' as he's goin' ter run a gallopin' race 'stead of trottin' I kinder tink I'll hoodwink dem 'f only had a fresh han' ter ride 'im," explained Shorty.

"Say, dad, can I toot my horn for a minit?" asked Shorty, Junior, looking around from behind a slice of toast he was scoffing.

"Yes, grind away."

"Yer needn't fret yer gizzards out 'bout a jock'. I'll ride dat plug for yer, ol' man," continued the kid, quietly.

"You?" exclaimed Shanks.

"Yer'd mak' a pretty fist ridin' 'im," remarked his dad, sarcastically.

"Keep yer shirts on a minit. I'll ride der nag 'f yer say so, an' I tell yer I ain't no slouch at it; dad, yet jess giv' me a pair of spurs an' a whip, an' I'll take all der run out of a hoss dat's in 'im," answered Shorty, Junior.

"Where in General Jackson d'yer learn ter squat a hoss?" demanded Shorty, looking at the kid with wide open eyes.

"Oh, cheess it, dad; did I used ter spin der nags up ter Jerome Park, in N' York?" answered the boy, coolly.

"By jinks 'f he can stick or he's the very card," exclaimed Shanks, slapping his knees.

"I'll risk 'im by jingo," said Shorty, jumping up and snapping his friend enthusiastically on the shoulder.

"Dere ain't much risk, dad, if der hoss'll run," chirped Shorty Junior.

"He'll run," replied his paternal, and a few minutes later they took a walk down to the stable and inspected the boneyard steed, who was quietly munching his feed.

"Yee-up, I guess he'll leg it," was the verdict of Shorty Junior, after he had had a gallop on the back of Barebones.

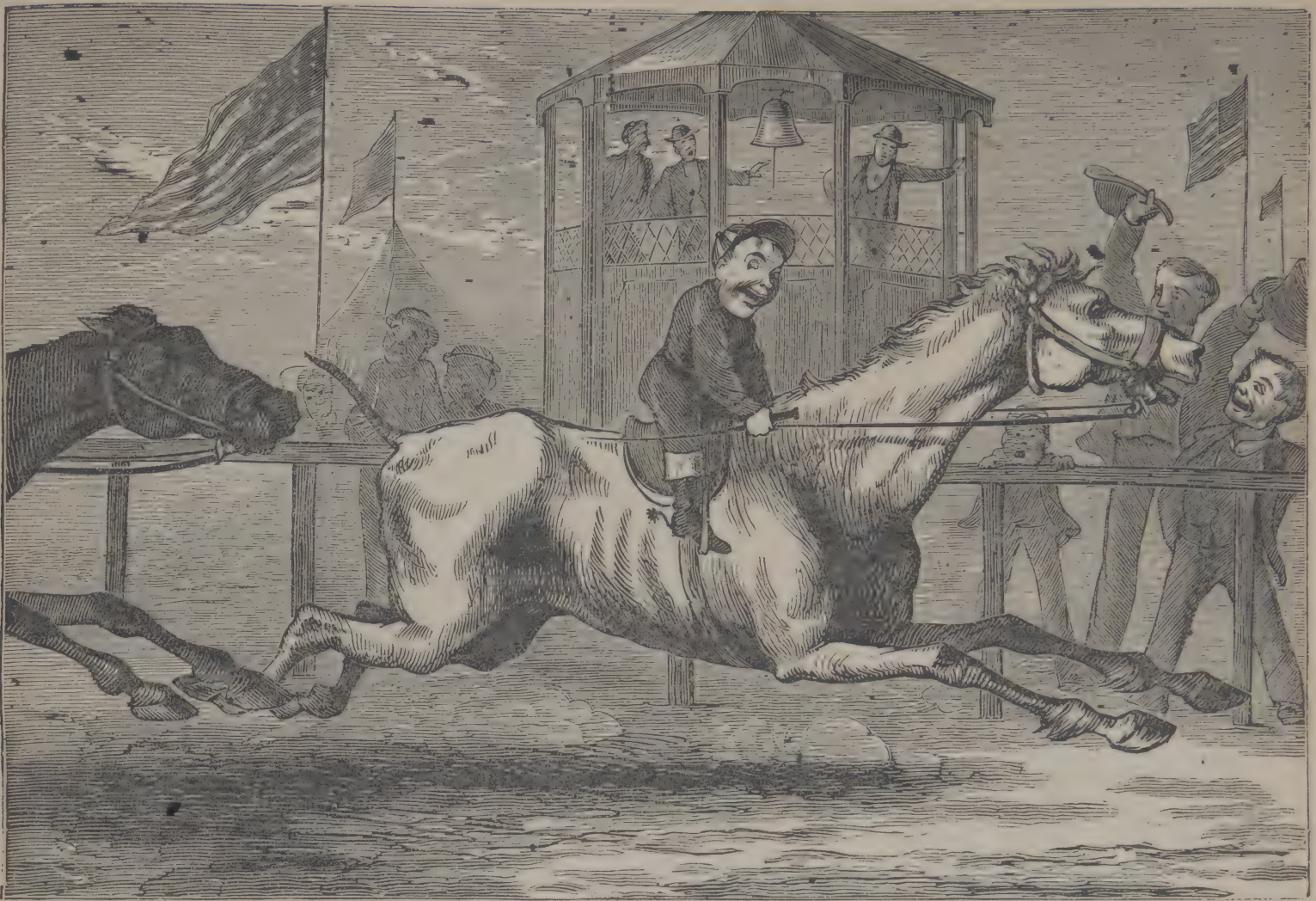
"Going to run him to win, Shorty?" asked Shanks, as they waked back to the hotel.

"From der word go."

"That settles it. I wint' going to stick up my little pie on it, and if you want any sugar sing out," answered Shanks.

"I guess I've got 'nuff ter run me 'long. 'F I run short I'll squeal, pard," said Shorty.

There was an immense jam at the race course the morning of the grand race; twenty of the fastest and



"Bully boy yer done it like a little man!" exclaimed Shorty, rushing over to greet his son, who was astride of Boneyard.

best blooded steeds in the great West were going to struggle for the championship, and the rich stake and the people were excited to the heart's core over the event.

On the course all was a surging mass of turbulent humanity, men rushing here and there with little books entering their bets.

"Two to one on 'Gray Eagle!'"

"Eight to one against 'Western Prince!'"

"Even on 'Gray Eagle!'"

"Six to two on 'Ah Sirs!'"

"Eight to one on 'Lily Dale!'"

"How's Boneyard?" shouted a voice, and a roar of laughter, seemed to say he was out of the race entirely.

"Why, ain't he going to run?" asked Shanks, as he elbowed his way into the crowd.

"Oh, yes, he'll run like a dog's tail, behind," answered the pool seller, laughingly.

"Got any ducats 'bout your clothes says so?" inquired Shanks.

"Forty to one 'gainst Boneyard!" exclaimed a sport.

"I'm in on that for hundreds, if you want to make it," said Shanks.

"An' I'll scoop in all der loose money any yer fellers may have left arter yer thro' wid dat man," chimed in Shorty, putting in an appearance with a roll of bills in his hand.

"Ha, ha, ha! all the fools ain't dead yet," laughed the pool seller.

"Put up, or shut up," said Shorty, as he shoved his money out to the right and left.

"There goes the saddling bell," called out a man, and Shorty and Shanks rushed off to the shed where Boneyard, as they called him, was standing.

"Boneyard, entered by Shorty—who's going to ride him?" inquired one of the judges, as the skeleton steed was led forward with a miniature saddle strapped on his back.

"Yer can sot me down for dat posish," chirped a voice, and Shorty, Junior, in a suit of royal purple velvet, trimmed with silver bullion, tripped up in front of the astonished judges and ducked his cunning little jockey cap.

"Great heavens! what's that?" exclaimed the judge, starting back and looking at the specimen before him.

"Dat's der hoss-fly dat's goin' ter win dis race, ol' stick in the mud," answered Shorty, Junior, tripping over to his father and Shanks.

"Hold him in; don't force der runnin' till der home stretch, an' den push 'im for all dat's in 'im. Look out for dat Gray Eagle plug, an' 'I he wants ter pass

yer at der start, let 'im bile. I tink dat's all, little one; only win der race for me, 'I yer can, as I've got a pile of stamps hangin' on it," was what Shorty said as he lifted his son up in the saddle.

"Hush, gov. If dere's a ghost of win in der ole plug I'll rustle it out of 'im, yer bet," answered Shorty, Junior, while a shout of laughter went up from the immense crowd as he turned the skeleton steed and walked him quietly past the grand stand towards the starting point.

"Twig the monkey on the bunch of bones!"

"Take the baby off and put him to bed!"

"They ain't going to let that skin-and-bone thing with the monkey on ride, are they?"

"Take the plug out somewhere and let him die!"

"Gray Eagle against the field!"

"Seven to four against Jumping Jennie!"

"Twenty to one against Boneyard!"

"Eight to three on Western Prince!" yelled the crowd, while the ladies laughed and made their bets on their favorites.

There was a few minutes pause before all the horses could be got together; then down the course swept twenty of the fastest steppers of the Pacific coast, their graceful limbs striking out easily as their jockeys held them back.

"Go!" yelled the steward.

"They're off!—they're off!" shouted the crowd, as the horses sprang forward like arrows launched from a bow.

At first you could only see a confused mass; but by the time the quarter mile pole was reached you could distinguish their order; Western Prince led off by two lengths, closely followed by Jumping Jennie, who struggled bravely for the lead, urged on by her rider's spur and whip; then came the others in groups of two and three, among the last of which ran Gray Eagle and Boneyard, the latter about half a length in the rear of his quaker-coated opponent.

At the half mile pole the position was but little changed. Jumping Jennie had dropped back after being forced too much; Western Prince held his lead; but the free use of the whip and spur showed that he was being urged to his utmost; Gray Eagle, with Boneyard still lying on his flanks, had crept forward, and now lay well to the front.

"Why don't he rush him?" exclaimed Shanks, excitedly.

"Der boy kno's what he's 'bout, yer bet," answered Shorty, as he watched every jump of his horse through a glass.

At the three-quarter pole there was a change in the order of affairs. Gray Eagle, ridden by one of California's shrewdest jockeys, suddenly dashed to the

front, collared Western Prince, and after a short, sharp struggle, darted past him, followed by Shorty, Junior, holding back the skeleton steed, while the rest of the field were left trailing in the rear.

Down they came towards the home stretch, Gray Eagle straining every muscle and tendon to shake off his thin competitor.

"Hurrah! Gray Eagle wins!"

"Gray Eagle!"

"Gray Eagle! 'Rah!"

Even as they yelled there was a quick change, and the skeleton steed, for the first time feeling the whip and spur of his little rider, shot forward, shaking off his false tail, and the next moment had crossed the score, the winner of one of the closest run races ever had on the Western slope.

"Bully boy, yer done it like a little man!" exclaimed Shorty, rushing over to greet his son, while Shanks, in the exuberance of his spirits, threw down his hat and danced on it.

"Close work dat was, dad, an' 'I hadn't saved ol' Boney up in der fust dig out I never could 'ave fatched 'im thro' in dat las' pinch," crowed Shorty, Junior, looking down comically at his dad, who was advancing to help him out of the saddle, while a laughing and cheering crowd gathered quickly around them.

"I thought I'd have died laughing when I seen the old plug wake himself up, shake his false tail off, and paddle ahead like a streak of greased lightning," observed Shanks, brushing the dust off his badly-used hat.

"Where's the boy that rode that crowbait of a winner?" asked the rider of Gray Eagle, forcing his way over to Shorty's side.

"I 'spect's I se der tooth-brush yer huntin' for," said Shorty, Junior, turning around and facing the inquirer.

"Well, by Jupiter in pink ribbons! if yere ain't about the shortest jock that ever I spurred against!" exclaimed the other, gazing down in a half astonished, half amused manner at his infant conqueror.

"Short 'nuff ter mak' short work wid dat gray nag, of yourn, dat's why I'se called Shorty, Junior, I 'spose," answered the imp, pertly.

"That's so, youngster; big or little you cleaned out Bill Stevens, and fellows say I ain't the worst jock on the slope," laughed his late opponent, good-naturedly.

"Well, it was anybody's race till der end; dem oder snoozers run all der wind out of der nags 'fore dey got half way 'round," chirped our little winner.

"That's so. I tumbled to you laying on my quarter all the time, but I thought Gray Eagle could shake that skinny hoss off any time, and that's just where

I got sucked in," acknowledged the other, moving away.

"Now, dad, slide me off to som' place wher I can get som' chuck inter me, for I jounced myself so empty dat I'se hollow as a drum," said Shorty, Junior, to his paternal a few moments later, and leaving his agents word in reference to his bets, he took a carriage, drove back to the hotel, and the little winner was soon packing grub into himself with an appetite four sizes too big for his small body.

There was an overflowing house that evening to greet the New York Minstrels, and the moment the curtain went up there arose a shout from the boys to see the boss rider of the West, who had that day scooped in the stakes and won the Grand Occidental race.

"Fetch out de jock!"

"Hey, hi! Shorty, Junior!"

"Come out here and show yourself!"

"Where's de boy dat skinned dem all out on de hoss ridin' bizness?"

"Shorty! Shorty! Shorty!" yelled the boys, while the other performers stood quietly waiting for the tumult to cease in order that they might make themselves heard.

"Hol' on der show for a minit an' I'll let der kid run out an' bow," said Shorty, and the next moment Shorty, Junior, dressed in his little velvet riding suit, and carrying a small whip in his hand, tripped out, doffed his tiny cap, and bowing to the right and left, stood looking coolly at the immense crowd in front of him, who greeted his appearance with a shout of welcome.

"How did you get away with them?" yelled a voice.

"Hol' yer breath, folkses, an' I'll giv' yer a verse dat I jes' thort of," said the kid, and striking an attitude, he sang:

"I'se was out ter der track dis bery day,

Du-da, du-da-da;

An' I bet my money on a skinny ole nag,

But mos' der oder fellers bet on a gray,

Du-da, du-da-da;

Der skinny nag he won dat race,

Du-da, du-da-da;

Jess scooted in an' took first place,

An', oh, I'se glad I didn't bet on der gray,

Glory hallelujerami!"

The song, coming just at that particular time, and rendered as it was in such a comical manner by the tiny mite of a creature before them, carried the audience by storm, and Shorty, Junior, received a perfect whirlwind of applause as he backed himself off the stage, and after a pause the regular performance proceeded as usual, all hands being well received.

"Well, Shorty, what are you going to do with the Boneyard now?" asked Shanks, as they strolled slowly home that evening.

"Dere's a couple of fellers dat wants ter speculate; dey've got an idea of tofin' 'im down east an' catchin' der Yankees nappin', an' I may let 'im slide 'n get my figger; 'n don't, I'll bounce 'im off down dere myself, an' lay for suckers when I go back," answered Shorty.

"Best hang ter 'im, dad; he's a wind-splitter, an' 'll mak' som' of der fancy plugs look sick if he gits 'long side of dem," broke in the kid, who was trotting along by their side, and amusing himself by the free use of a putty-blower, with which he had managed to paste a grocer in the ear with a ball of putty, break up a love scene between a red-headed girl and her adorer, by hitting the former on the nose with a wad just as her admirer was leaning forward to kiss her; put an old lady in hysterics by filling her ear with putty; made a man hoist his umbrella, under the impression it was raining, as he heard the putty balls rattle off his bran new silk hat; caused a lame darkey to throw up his supper by shooting a ball down his throat as he was in the act of swallowing an oyster, and finally startled a policeman out of a quiet snooze in a doorway by letting fly a pellet that flattened it self on his chin, and scared him out of three months' growth.

"Darned if I don't believe the boy's about right; the horse is a ripper, no mistake, and I'll go snacks in the expense if you're willing," observed Shanks, after a pause.

"All O. K. Dat settles it," answered our little friend.

Two days after the above the New York Minstrels, having closed one of the most successful engagements ever played on the Pacific slope, making a host of friends by their gentlemanly behavior and willingness to join in any sport that was going, and enjoying themselves heartily, might have been seen packing their traps preparatory to once more turning their faces eastward on their return trip.

"Tain't no use howlin', boys, dat 'Frisco's a red hot ol' town. What yer can't see of sport ain't worth buyin' specs ter hunt up, an' der folks dust down dere sugar widout rubbin' der figgers off a silver half dollar," said Shorty, as they drove down to the Central Pacific Railroad, which was to convey them to Salt Lake City, wher he had determined to lie over a few days and treat the Mormons to some first-class negro minstrelsy.

"Keno; correct, dad. I tink it's jess a highfaintin' ol' town," chirped his son, who was leaning out of the window of the stage and fishing for gentlemen's hats with a cane with a pin in it.

Reaching the depot they transferred themselves and baggage from the stage to one of Pullman's handsome

cars, and proceeded to make themselves as comfortable as possible for the long ride before them.

"Where are we going to show at in Salt Lake City?" asked Shanks, as he nestled himself back lazily in his seat and watched Shorty, Junior, tickling the ear of an old gentleman in the seat in front of him, who had fallen to sleep.

"Dere's only one in der place, der Salt Lake Theater, so I reckon we'll open dere. I hear it's a rattlin' big shebang, but der folks has been in der habit of payin' ter com' in wid pumpkins, taters, cabbage, an' tings dey raise, but we'll put der drop on dat kind of sugar," exclaimed Shorty.

"Nary cabbage'll see dis skeeter," chimed in the kid, comically.

And now, having them once more eastward bound, we will leave them on their journey till next week.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We left our friend Shorty and his troupe of New York Minstrels speeding over the Central Pacific Rail Road on their way to Salt Lake City, where they proposed treating the Mormons to a few performances.

They had not been under way but a short time before Shorty's fun-loving and mischievous proclivities commenced to stir him up, and he squinted around to see what the prospects were for a racket; but everything was so tame and dull that he had almost given up all hopes of any fun and concluded to take a snooze, when the train stopped at a station, and a stout, red-faced old lady, carrying half a dozen baskets, bandboxes and small satchels, came puffing into the car, brushed off Shanks' hat in passing, stepped on Shorty's foot, dropped a setting of hen's eggs into Dave Reed's lap, jawed the conductor, backed a weak, mild-looking man over the back of a seat, nearly dislocating his spine, kicked a lady's pet dog in the ribs and sent him howling into a corner of the car, glared over a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles at the rest of the passengers, sassed a brakeman who hurried in, and finally dumped herself into a whole seat, threw up the window, spread her baskets, bandboxes and satchels out on the seat in front of her, and leaning back, observed:

"Deon't eny of you folks think yure goin' ten get the best of Phoebe Jane Sprillers, for I cum from Bosting, I deu, an' I guess we knew our rights deown dere."

"I don't care a clam if yer were fifty Phoebe Janes, I want yer ter keep dem bug-mashin' feet of yodr'n off my little hoofs, or I'll make yer think yer com' from der moon!" exclaimed Shorty, as he pulled off his boot, and nursed his crippled foot.

"Why deon't yu put yure feet in yure pocket, ef yu don't want them stepped on, Mister Hop-on-my-thumb?" she answered, mopping her red face with an American flag for a handkerchief.

"And if you'll allow my hat, madam, to remain on my head you'll greatly oblige me. I paid ten dollars yesterday for that hat, and look at it now," said Shanks, returning from chasing his new silk hat up to the top end of the car, where she had kicked it.

"Hoity toity, daddy long legs, what're yu cryin' 'bout? Fools and their money must be easy parted when yu'd give ten dollars for a hat. Why, I could get yu one in Bosting for two," she chuckled, as she arranged her baskets and bandboxes.

"I wish to thunder you'd stayed in Boston," exclaimed Shanks, as he wiped some tobacco spit off his shiny hat and gazed mournfully at the dents she had kicked in it.

"And I wish the devil would have flown away with you before he let you and your infernal hen yard into this car. Great Gollah, woman, look at my clothes, will you?" shouted Dave Reed, springing up excitedly and exhibiting his lap, into which half a dozen of the eggs she had dropped had mashed themselves over his clothes, leaving him painted as gaily as an Italian sunset on a circus bill.

"Eggs hain't goin' ten hurt enybody, ef they ain't rotten, en them's jest fresh laid, so yu needn't get yure skinny little back up, an' try to pick a muss with me, fur I kin just tell yu one thing, young feller, I won't take no sass from eny of yu snipe headed fellers, as sure as my name's Phoebe Jane Sprillers."

"But, everlasting Columbia, you've ruined my clothes, and what in blue blazes am I going to do? I can't go this way," exclaimed Dave, as he scraped all the egg off he could with his penknife, leaving a great yellow stain.

"Yu kin paint yure legs and go naked for all I keer, my canary bird," chuckled the woman.

"If you was a man you'd stand a good chance of getting your eye painted black and blue, my Boston gazelle," growled Dave Reed, as he started forward to the baggage car to try and scare up another pair of pants.

"An-and re-ally, ma'am, if yu'll allow me to mention it, I-I wish you w-would a-avoid if-if possible, crushing me-me over the back of the seats as I re-really be-lieve you've broke my spine in a dozen pieces," said the meek little man, hesitatingly, feeling around behind him to see if he could discover the fractures.

"Yu arn't got eny more backbone in yu than an eel or a sawdust baby; better stick a porous plaster on it an' keep yure bean chewer shut," replied the woman.

"But you'll excuse me for saying that I've got feelings the same as?"

"Feelings, fiddlesticks! Yure worse ner a suckin' baby; if I had a stick of whalebone I'd make yu a dozen backbones," retorted the red-faced woman, getting up and flouncing down the car to the water cooler that stood at the end.

"Now's yer time, Chip; skin it an lay low fer a racket," whispered Shorty to his son the moment he saw her back turned.

"I'se fly as a detect," piped the little shaver, scrambling down from his paternal's knee, scooting across the car and climbing into one of the old lady's bandboxes, Shorty fixing the lid over him without attracting the owner's attention.

As soon as she had returned to her seat, Shorty arose, gave the wink to the others, and changing his seat to one just behind her, said:

"So yer from Boston, ma'am?"

"I kalkilate I be when I'm tu hum," she answered, tossing her head.

"Don't yer lie, Mrs. Sprillers; for I knowed yer when yer used ter dig clams at Coney Island," chirped a voice, causing Mrs. S. to start up as if stung by a rattlesnake, while a quiet grin stole over the faces of the rest of the 'troupe and the passengers who smelt fun ahead.

"I'd just give a whole lot of notions ef I could only find out that sassy-jawed critter that sed that," remarked the red-faced woman, staring around at the faces of the passengers.

"Is yer husband 'live, ma'am?" inquired Shorty, when she had partially quieted down.

"Yes, course he be. Yu deon't take me for eny of them gallivantin' widders that's flyin' about the country, du yu?" she replied, tartly.

"Look out or der debble will snatch yer, ol' Sprillers, yer kno' yer fust husband was hung an' der nex' one's in der jug for sheep-stealin'," broke in the mysterious voice.

Mrs. S.'s eyes fairly started from her head and her face grew more fiery than ever as she glared viciously around in search of the speaker.

"I'd hang yu, yu sneakin' skunk yu, ef I could git yu."

"Yer want ter choke me lik' yer did yer blind granmammy," chirped the voice, coming apparently from under the seat, and the red-faced woman, feeling sure she had at last cornered her mysterious tormentor, made a savage kick in his direction, busting out the toes of a new pair of gaiters in the effort and scooping the nail off her big toe.

"Neow I want all yu smarty folks tu jest knoww that I arn't goin' ta put up with this tomfooling and lying eny mor', en the first rule I ketch pokin' fun of sayin' things 'bout me I'll jest mak' him sweat!" she threatened, wild with rage and vexation.

"Better dry up, ol' Sprillers, or I'll tell how yer used ter rob der chicken roosts an' get bilin' drunk down in Jersey," retorted the kid, who had carved himself a small hole in the bandbox and was enjoying the fun as much as the rest.

"Yure en abominable liar whoever yu be!" yelled the now frantic woman, while the rest of the passengers, burst out into a roar of laughter, Shorty stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth to prevent being heard.

"Don't yer call me a liar, or I'll tell how yer eloped wid Capt'n Pompon of der hoss marines, an' was fotched back by der police after pawnin' yer duds."

"Listen tu that I listen tu them lies!" exclaimed the red-faced woman, hunting under the seats for her persecutor. "Me elope with Capt'n Pompon or eny other capt'n ever lived. Oh, but I'll put somebody in jail for this," she groaned.

"Mebbe yer wasn't sniped in der act of gobblin' a two dollar bill out of der colleeshun box at meetin' one Sunday, Sprillers," whispered Shorty Junior, while another laugh rang out, so loud that the conductor rushed in, had matters explained to him, summoned a brakeman and instituted a thorough search.

"Yer'd better go hunt for dem two fares yer knocked down," suggested the mysterious voice, and the conductor flushed up, and rushed back to where he thought he heard the voice, only to find a lot of small baskets and bandboxes.

"Come out of here, I don't want any of this smart business in any train I'm running!" ordered the conductor, darting around from one part of the car to the other, followed by his brakeman.

"Thort der engin' was runnin' dis train. Guess yer best go soak yer head till it sprouts like taters, for yer can't ketch nothin' 'ere, Mister Ticket-puncher," said Shorty Junior, a few moments later.

"Over there! over there!" yelled the conductor, pointing in the direction of the meek-looking man, who was quietly smiling to himself over his revenge, when a wild dive was made. He was upset, shook, searched, pawed, and his seat searched under and over for the hidden owner of the voice.

"Here! stop that! Let me alone! Keep your hands off me!" cried the meek passenger, as he found himself flung around, shoved about, kicked and jammed.

"Dat swell-head of a conductor better go back ter whackin' bulls or skinnin' mules, for he don't know enough ter chew muss," cried out the bandbox imp.

"Cum round here, right smart; I heard the pesky varmint close to me," screamed the red-faced woman, and the conductor, who was at the other end of the car, rushed back in time to hear the voice remark:

"Yer squealed on me, Sprillers. Now I'se goin' ter tell how yer got der gran' bounce out of boardin' school cause yer didn't wash yer big feet."



"Help! robbers! Oh-h-h-h!" "Now's my time ter skin it. Keep yer eyes peeled an' scoot when yer get der chance," said Shorty Jr.

"Yu nasty, lying thief, yu," retorted Mrs. Sprillers, shaking her closed fist over her head in her impotent rage, and the aforesaid fist in one of its swoops coming in collision with the conductor's somewhat prominent nose as he hurried to her side, the next moment that car was filled with a howling, bloody-nosed conductor, a jawing, excited female, a chuckling boy in a bandbox, and a cart-load of laughing passengers.

"Why, is Jehosaphat, don't you keep those pudding-bag fists of yours down?" demanded the conductor, wildly, as he held his handkerchief to his bloody nose.

"Burn it all! ef yu hadn't sich an all-fired mule's snout, it wouldn't get tetchted. Drat yure impudence enyhow, cummin' round an' runnin' yure long snipe nose 'gainst my hands, then blamin' me for it, ya cat-skinner yu," retorted the red-faced female, jumping up in her seat, and facing the conductor.

"Paste 'im in der snout agin, ol' Sprillers!" yelled Shorty Junior, and the woman wheeled around like a flash, to see who had spoken.

"Kick 'er on der shins, ol' ticket puncher, she ain't got 'er false calves on ter-day!" advised the imp, after a moment's silence.

"If any of you people's got any remarks to make, I'd like to have you get up and make them. As for me running my nose, ma'am, against your big boxing-gloves of fists, you're a confounded idiot to say so."

"I'm an idiot, am I? I tell yu I'm Phoebe Jane Sprillers, of Bosting; en I arn't goin' tu stand no out-west ourang outang call me an idiot!" she shrieked, smatching the excited conductor by the coat collar, and jamming him up in a corner.

"Leg'go me!" he yelled, trying to push her off.

"I'm an idiot, hey?" she cried, as she pulled out a couple of handfuls of his hair, kicked him on the shins, tore off his collar and shirt-front, and bumped his head up against the side of the car.

"You hag, I'll have you hung for this!" screamed the conductor, trying to trip her up.

"And I've got big boxing-gloves of fists, hev I?" she hissed, as she bent him over the back of a seat, choked him till his eyes bulged out, slammed him down on the floor, walked over him, picked him up, stood him on his head, till the money all rolled out of his pockets, and then slung him up in the corner under the ice-cooler to get his breath back, his clothes pinned

together, and try to collect his scattered coins and senses.

During the excitement attendant upon the fight, Shorty had sprang forward and hurriedly released his boy from his close quarters in the bandbox, and then resumed his seat with the rest of the troupe, who were shaking their sides with laughter over the racket, none of whom, however, seemed to enjoy the fun any more than the little imp who had started and kept it going and who now sat perched on his daddy's knee grinning like a monkey at the scene.

It took a long time to restore quiet to the car, and to persuade the red-faced female from Boston not to clean out the whole car as she threatened forcibly to do.

The conductor was picked up, carted off, washed, gummed over with sticking-plaster, clothes pinned together, ice water poured into him, seated in a chair and left to think over all the circumstances in the unfortunate affair.

After this, the rest of the trip proved a quiet one, the boys enjoying themselves, playing cards and joking, till Salt Lake City was finally reached.

"Which, where or whither glideth we?" inquired Shanks; "and whose horse pistol roof will cover our hairy heads?"

"Der Townsend House is der name of der coop, an' 'ere's der waggin dat's ter jerk us dere," answered Shorty, pointing to a large picnic wagon drawn by four fat, sleepy-looking mules.

"Is yer from der Townsend House?" asked Shorty, of a tall, thin, mournful-looking specimen, dressed in a suit of stuff resembling rag carpets, and wearing an immense slouch hat of a tobacco-spit color.

"Y-e-e-s," he drawled out, without raising his eyes from a volume entitled "Lives of Celebrated Latter Day Saints," which he was sleepily perusing.

"Were you sent down here after a party from San Francisco?" demanded Shanks, impatiently.

"'M," he ejaculated.

"Let's climb in an' I'll driv' der donkeys. I tink dis is one of der ter too late in der day saints—he's been forgot by der gang when dey died an' so he's livin' on ter save funeral expenses," said Shorty, gazing up in despair at the literary mummy.

The company made haste to scramble into the wagon, and leaving their baggage in charge of the rail-

road agent, Shorty mounted the seat alongside of his laconic friend, and said:

"Now see 'ere, ole corpsey, dis yere crowd wants ter be carted rite 'long ter der Townsend House. If yer can't leave der saints long nuff ter waltz us through, jess pass over dem reins, an' I'll steer yer donkeys for yer."

"Git yup!" chirruped the lank Mormon, without raising his eyes, and the four fat, sleepy-headed mules pricked up their long ears and crawled off at a funeral pace, the reins idly and loosely hanging from the driver's hands, who kept on reading.

"Say, ol' shadbelly, dis ain't no biz for yer ter be in, drivin' a bus; yer ort ter hire yerself out for a sign ter a coffin or stiff juggler's shop. Why, der looks of dat pokeberry mug ef yourn'd be better dan a peck ob raw onions ter make der mourners snifle," observed Shorty, nudging his taciturn seatmate in the ribs.

"Gentle, beware!" groaned the driver, looking more mournful than a willow tree by moonlight over a fresh-made grave, with a yellow dog howling under it.

"Gen—what? Yer another, and see how yer lik' it," said Shorty, and snatching up the whip, he proceeded to astonish the sleepy-headed mules by a course of stinging cuts that started them off into a gallop.

"Stop!" commanded the lank Mormon.

"Oh, yer be hanged. I guess I kin drive dis machine ter der hotel widout makin' a hearse of it an' carryin' a corpse!" exclaimed Shorty; and slipping his arms under the astonished Mormon, he suddenly dumped him off the box into the dusty street, and grabbing the reins, whipped up the mules into a faster gallop, leaving the Latter-Day Saint squatted in a heap in the road.

"Bully for you, Shorty. I thought we was going to a snail's funeral," said Shanks, as soon as the troupe had got through roaring at the comical appearance the Mormon presented.

After a lively dash around the town, to the astonishment of the mules and the citizens, Shorty drove up in style to the Townsend House, and five minutes after their arrival he managed to turn that quiet old hotel topsy-turvy with his tricks and capers, giving the old Mormon proprietor an idea he was entertaining the escaped inmates of a lunatic asylum.

"Dere," said Shorty, as he flung himself down on the sofa in his room, "I feel better, I tink. Fair an' squar', pard, I'd have busted an' blowed der gang tu pieces 'f I hadn't got a chance tu let off steam. Dat cussed ol' stoten bottle of a driver was wuss on me dan de seven year's itch."

After a good square wash and dinner, Shorty, Shanks and the kid took a hack and drove around the city, taking a look at the Tabernacle, Brigham Young's Lion and Bee-hive houses, named after carved figures in front of them, then stopped at the theater, which they were surprised to find so large and well furnished with scenery and properties. Having seen to all the necessary arrangements for an afternoon rehearsal and the evening performance they drove back to the hotel.

"Wonder if Brig an' any of his wives'll be there tonight?" queried Shanks, as they started that evening for the show house.

"I guess so; I hear der ol' man's great on der show biz, so I sent 'im dead-head tickets for 'issel an' gang of women, an' I've fixed up an act dat I tink 'll tickle 'im 'f he does com'; by the way did yer twig der big rocking chair in der parquette wid all der little chairs stuck round it? Well, dat's fixed dat way for his royal Mormon nibs when he comes, I s'pect," answered Shorty.

On their arrival they found the large building much better filled than they had expected. Brigham Young and half a dozen of his wives were in their seats and the performance all ready to begin.

"Ring up der rag 'f yer all ready; an', boys, sail in an' do yer purty, for I wants dese folks ter see der difference 'tween der New York Minstrels an' dose snide bamfatin' gangs dat go 'round starrin' it in der summer an' soup-housin' it in der winter," directed Shorty, and he hastened away as the bell rang to dress for his part in the new act, which was greeted with such roars of laughter and applause that I must give you the briefest description of it.

It was called "Wives Wanted, or a Glimpse into Mormonism." Shorty Junior, dressed as an old bachelor swell, was supposed to have advertised for wives. Shorty, costumed as his servant, is ordered to be on hand to expel those applicants whose charms do not come up to the matrimonial mark, and the rest of the troupe dressed as women call in answer to the advertisement, and are horrified and indignant at Shorty Junior's diminutive proportions, and receive the one-two-three grand bounce from Shorty, who has stationed himself by the door, rolled up his sleeves, and fires one applicant after the other out in a manner so comical as to bring down the house.

Altogether the performance was a hit; the Mormons had never seen anything in that line to equal it before, and following the example of their great chief, Brigham, applauded every act.

Quite a crowd had gathered around the private entrance, when Shorty, Shanks, and Shorty Junior, came out, determined to have a close look at the tiny chap, who by his comical sayings and actions, had kept them in a roar of laughter whenever he appeared.

"Is he really 'live, squire?" asked a big, hulking farmer.

"Yer bet, I've 'live Sparrowgrass, feel dat," answered the kid, leaning over his paternal's shoulder, who was carrying him, and giving the farmer's ear a tug that brought the water into his eyes, and caused him to howl like a stuck pig, while the crowd shouted with laughter and let the little imp depart quietly, satisfied in their own minds that he was very, very much alive.

"Going to roost, Shorty?" asked Shanks, as they reached the hotel.

"I tink not, der nite's mos' ter fine. I'll go up an' put der kid ter snooze, an' den jine yer in a cigar under der trees out yere."

"Sail ahead," observed Shanks, as he hauled a chair off the portico, threw himself into it, struck a match and was enjoying a quiet evening smoke, when he was joined by his friend, who remarked, as he pulled up a chair:

"Der kid must hev been tired ter death. He was asleep 'fore he'd teched der piller."

But he wasn't—not much; for no sooner did he hear the door close on his dad than he was out of bed like a flash, and without waiting for to array himself in any stray raiment, he started out on a voyage of discovery, and ripe for any mischief or fun that might turn up.

Passing swiftly along the hallway he suddenly heard footsteps approaching from the other direction, and hastily darting into a room, the door of which chanced to be ajar he secreted himself in the lower drawer of a bureau that had been left partly open, and was half-filled with feminine toggery.

"Jimmiey gripes! I tink dey're comin' in 'ere," mused Shorty Junior, as he heard the footsteps stop at the door, and after a pause the handle was turned and the kid, peeping from under some starched undergarments that he had pulled over himself, saw a tall, thin, vinegar-looking old maid enter, light a lamp, and, after simpering and smirking before the mirror, lock the door and commence disrobing her skinny form.

"Well, I swon 'f ain't caught lik' a rat in a trap. Golly, I've got ter get out of 'ere an' back inter bed 'fore der ol' man turns in, or he'll be raisin' a war-whoop, an' 'f I bounce out of wher' I am, dis ol' gal'll howl der top of her head off. Mebbe, 'tain't a mess I've got inter," soliloquized the imp, as he gazed around the room, and finally determined on a plan.

Waiting till the old maid's back was turzed, he

stuck his mouth up from under the muslin piled on top of him, and whispered:

"Hist!"

A bombshell bursting in the room could hardly have had a greater effect upon the spinster, who sprang fully two feet from where she had been standing, huddled her skirts around her, and stood peering to the right and left with eyes that seemed ready to start from their sockets. Recovering courage slightly at not seeing any frightful apparition, she peeped timidly under the bed and into her closets only to find all vacant.

"Te-he-he-he!" she giggled, removing her false hair, putting her artificial teeth to soak in a tumbler, and relieving her form of its plumpness; "I guess I must have imagined I heard somebody. Ma used to say I was such a nervous, timid young creature; anyway, I oughtn't to be left alone a minute."

"Yee-up, yer a purty timid critter, yer are. Yer'd mak' a bully ol' scarecrow, or a lot of bone handles for knives," soliloquized our little friend, as he watched her hauling off her striped stockings.

Then fearing that his dad would return and miss him, he resolved to bring matters to a crisis, and sticking his head from under a night-gown, he whispered, harshly:

"Hang it all, can't yer keep quiet till she gets in bed; den we can guzzle her."

With one wild bound the old maid sprang from her chair, as if a torpedo had exploded underneath it, another spring brought her into the middle of the floor, where she opened the cellar doors of her potatoe trap and shouted in a voice that could be heard half a mile:

"Help! murder! robbers! Oh-h-h-h!"

"Now's my time 'f I want ter skin it. Keep yer eyes peeled an' scoot when yer get der chance," was the advice Shorty Junior gave himself, as he bounded from the drawer, blew out the light, pinched the old maid on her skinny legs and darted for the door, just as it was burst open and the proprietor of the hotel, Shorty, Shanks, and half a dozen of the rest of the boarders rushed in.

"Here, fetch a light, somebody; where are you, ma'am?" asked the proprietor.

"M-u-r-d-e-r! Oh, save me, save me!" shrieked the old maid.

"Here's a light," said Shanks, striking a match on his pantaloons, lighting the lamp, and illuminating the room.

"Now, ma'am, where is he?"

But the old maid, suddenly becoming conscious that she was in her night-clothes before a lot of men, went off in hysterics. The room was thoroughly searched and not even a mouse found, for, Shorty Junior, taking advantage of the darkness, excitement and the door being open, had glided back to bed, where his dad found him ten minutes later when everything had been quitted down.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Say, sport, how long have you fixed for us to hang up our hats in this land of sage-brush, prairie-dogs and latter-day saints?" inquired Shanks, as they left the hotel for a walk, the morning following Shorty Junior's comical racket with the old maid.

"Not long, pard. I tink we'll skate out of 'ere 'bout der day arter ter-morrer. I guess dere's loose stamps 'nuff floatin' 'round dese saints' robes ter pay us for runnin' der show till dat time. What's der matter? 'Feared of fallin' in love wid som' of der Mormon gazelles?" laughed Shorty, nudging his chum in the ribs with his cane.

"Just as soon think of falling in love with a government mule as any of the petticoats I've spotted yet," said Shanks, earnestly.

"Hello, Mister Brig!" exclaimed Shorty Junior, as they were passing down Main street.

"Sir—oh, yes, my little bachelor friend from last night. Well, how d'you do this morning, after all your matrimonial troubles of last night? I was sorry to see you couldn't get suited in a wife," said the great Mormon leader and prophet, stopping short and shaking hands with the kid.

"Oh, I feels bully. I s'pect yer didn't have so much trouble gettin' a wife, or yer wouldn't have had such dead loads on 'em," answered Shorty Junior, pertly.

"It isn't the trouble getting them so much as the trouble keeping them after you do get them; remember that, my young bachelor friend," laughed Brigham Young, patting him on the head.

"Three square meals a day an' two founces on dere dresses ort ter be nuff for any gal," said Shorty Junior.

"If that's all you know about women's wants, you'd better continue to be a young bachelor," advised the prophet. "But you haven't told me how you liked Salt Lake City yet."

"Oh, der streets is tiptop, an' der chuck at der hash-house wher I ties up at is scrumptious, but I don't know much 'bout der rest, kase all der folks has forgot ter invite me ter come an' see dem."

"Well, well," said Brigham, laughing heartily, "that'll never do; the first time you're around by the Lion-House, you must call and see me."

"Do yer take der part of der Lion?" asked the

kid, so comically that Brigham burst out laughing again.

"What kind of a Lion do you think I'd make?" he asked.

"A bully one, if yer'd wrinkle yer face up a little more, muss yer hair an' glue on a false tail; an' den yer've got such squads of wives, yer could eat one up every week 'thout der menagerie folks knowin' anythin' 'bout it 'cept dey smelled der blad or foun' der bones 'round," answered the kid, innocently.

"All right, little bachelor; when I conclude to take that part and travel about with a menagerie, I'll send you free tickets, and I hope you'll come and see me, the same as I did you," said the prophet, laughing heartily at the boy's quaint ideas and blunt way of expressing himself.

"Yer bet yer Mormon boots I'll come. Send fur me some day when yer goin' ter chew up one of der oldest, ugliest, an' toughest of yer wives ter slow music by der sarcus band, an' I'll come early so's ter hear her sass an' call yer names 'fore yer get yer claws and grinders on her," replied Shorty, Junior.

"Don't you think you'd better stay in Salt Lake City for awhile, and let me see if I can't make a little Mormon of you, and marry you to a half a dozen buxom Mormon beauties?" asked Brigham, after a pause, during which he had shaken hands and exchanged a few remarks with Shorty and Shanks.

"Not much, Mary Ann. I've afeard I ain't der right cut for a Morming, so yer'll have ter hang yer buxoms up ter dry fer me," answered the imp, shaking his head wisely.

"Well, well, I won't insist. Only I don't want you to forget to come and see me before you fly away from our 'Land of Promise,'" said Brigham Young, kindly, and after a cordial shake of the hands with Shorty Junior, and a pleasant bow and smile to Shorty and Shanks, he entered his carriage, and was driven homeward.

"Dat's nuther case of wher' der debbel ain't or least don't 'pear ter be haf's black as dey've got 'em daubed in der papers, and dat's allus der way wid dose newspaper inklingers; dey're boun' ter paint yer white's a clean-biled shirt or black as a sick crow," observed Shorty, as they resumed their walk.

"Fire! fire! fire!" rang out a cry as they approached Temple Street.

"Now den, ter show dem fellers how der New York fire boys walks inter a fire!" exclaimed Shorty, snatching up his little namesake and scooting down the street as fast as his little duck-legs would carry him; while Shanks galloped with giant strides alongside of him.

"Leg it, dad. 'F I'm too heavy, chuck me off an' skin it. I'll scramble 'long wid der crowd. Yer needn't be feared," said the kid, pluckily.

"Freeze fast, chip, wher' yer 're," answered his dad, as he turned the corner and came in full view of the fire, which proved to be a large three-story frame house, from the lower stories of which the flames were bursting, while volumes of smoke rolled upward.

"By George! Shorty, this is old biz," exclaimed Shanks, as he stripped off his coat, and following the example of his little friend, tried to force an entrance into the front door, only to be driven back by the suffocating clouds of smoke.

"Why der debbel don't der engines git on a stream?" asked Shorty, who had been watching the slow progress made by the two old-fashioned, worn-out hand-engines, while the immense crowd that had collected seemed paralyzed, and stood around with their mouths open and their hands idle.

"Great heavens! Shorty, there's some one alive up in the third story!" suddenly yelled Shanks, as a window was partly raised and then dropped again.

"By hokey, dat's so!" said Shorty, who, with face blackened and clothes scorched from trying to force his way into the burning building, stood now gazing up.

"There's some one being burnt up!" yelled the crowd; and they stood spellbound with horror.

"I could shin up dat tin water-pipe 'f I wasn't so heavy," said Shorty, quickly.

"There ain't a second to lose," answered Shanks.

"Dad, 'f yer'll gi' me a string ter pull up a rope wid, I'll skin up dat pipe lik' der old seratch was after me; an' 'f ther's anyone 'live up dere I'll der coon ter fotch 'em out. Don't be 'feared, dad; yer kno' I don't skeer worth a cent," said little Shorty Junior, tripping up to his father's side from where he had been left.

"I ain't afeard'd, kid, an' I glory in yer pluck," replied his dad; and a ball of twine being brought, it was fastened around his waist, and the next minute he was seen shinning up the water pipe like a little monkey, while the crowd, for the first time realizing the terrible danger of the undertaking, and the wonderful pluck of the little shaver, which had put them all to shame, found their voices and burst into a mighty cheer.

Upward and upward climbed the plucky little kid, stopping for a few seconds now and then to get his breath back, often enveloped in whirling clouds of suffocating smoke, out of which he would be seen shinning upward, till at last he was seen to reach the window, pause a moment as if to breathe, and then, kicking in the sash, disappear into the burning building.

"I tell yer dat boy's got more backbone an' grit dan der ol' man; dere ain't nuthin' slow or white-floved 'bout dat chick," said Shorty, who had watched his tiny son's ascent with a beating heart.



"Dat's too thin for a feller dat's rode a circus mule" laughed Shorty Jr., digging his spurs into his untamed steed.

"Pluck, he's got a cart-load of it. I hope to heaven no accident will happen to him," answered Shanks.

"If he's got his dad's luck 'bout 'im he's all hunk; if he ain't he's a gone coon."

"What keeps him?"

"What's he doing?"

"He's suffocated!"

"No he ain't!"

"Who is he?"

"Oh, Lord! Why don't he come?"

"The man ought to be shot that let him go up!"

"I wonder if he'll find anyone!"

"It was murder to let him go!"

"They're all dead by this time!" were a few of the exclamations indulged in by the crowd as they watched, with strained eyes, the window through which Shorty Junior, had disappeared, for what to them seemed ages.

"Say, pard, jest yer mind der string for a jiffy. I can't stan' dis any longer, so up I goes after der kid 'il get roasted at der fust step," said Shorty, commencing to haul off his boots so as to climb easy.

"Hang the string; let it hold itself. If you go shinning into that fiery furnace I'll be everlastingly darned if you won't find old Shanks pretty close behind you," replied the latter, also divesting himself of all his surplus raiment.

"There he is!"

"He's safe! he's safe!"

"Where, where is he?"

"At the window!"

"Hurrah! hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Bully for him!" yelled the crowd, a second later, and glancing up, Shorty saw the kid scramble lightly out upon the window-sill, wave his hand to him in a salute, and then commence hauling in the line, to which a rope had been made fast; while the crowd cheered and shouted like mad.

"What's he say?"

"Is there anyone up there?"

"What does he want?" demanded the crowd.

"Anybody up dere?" bellowed Shorty, through a fireman's trumpet, and there was a hush over all as they listened for the tiny sprite's reply.

"Yes, dere's one ol' chap up 'ere 'sides me!"

"Living or pegged out?" asked Shorty.

And again silence fell over the multitude till they heard the kid's voice clear above the crackling flames and falling timbers.

"Ise kep' him livin' so far, dad, but I sorter wish'd yer come' up an' giv' a feller a han'!"

Then there went up a mighty cheer that filled the

air, and the crowd found themselves stirred into action by the child's brave words.

"Mak' der rope fas' ter somethin' strong in der room, an' I'll be wid yer, chip, in less time dan it takes a fly to wink," called up Shorty through his horn.

"Tell 'im that I'll be along by the next train up," said Shanks.

A few moments later and the kid signaled all ready, and the next instant Shorty went shinning up the rope as if it had been a pair of stairs, closely followed by his inseparable chum, Shanks.

"Wher's yer victim?" asked Shorty, as he swung himself on to the window-sill.

"Dis way, dad, an' mind yer eyes, for der smoke's thicker dan a feather bed. I chucked a couple of buckets of water on ter him, an' sort of fitched 'im to, for he was clos' on a gone sucker when I lit on 'im. Guess der smoke must hav' keeled 'im over," explained Shorty Junior, as he darted ahead, and opening the door leading into another room, Shorty and Shanks beheld a fine-looking, gray-haired old gentleman stretched upon the floor insensible.

"Snatch 'im by der feet, pard, an' let's yank 'im out of dis hell-hole. See, dere's der flames bustin' thro' der door, an' it's hot nuff 'ere ter toast bread," said Shorty, and grabbing the insensible form of the old gentleman, they hurried him to the window, where a hastily-contrived hammock of bed-clothing was made, and he was lowered into the waiting arms of the crowd below, who carried him off at once to a doctor's residence close by.

"Now, if a feller was only in New York whar dey'd know'd nuff ter pass yer up der hose, I'd stay till der roof fell in, and squirt der last stream on der blaze, but I guess we may's well skip it, we've done 'bout all we could, so strike out, kid," said Shorty, as the smoke poured into the apartment in a volume.

"Skip it is," answered the kid, coolly, as he swung himself out of the window and commenced letting himself slowly down the rope, amidst the tumultuous cheers of the crowd, who caught him in their arms and were carrying the little hero off in triumph when his dad put in an appearance, rescued him, and seeing that they could be of no more assistance at the fire, the roof of the house threatening every moment to fall in, the three returned to the hotel, and washed the smut and traces of the fire from their persons.

"That was a close call the old man had. If the kid hadn't dropped on him just as he did, he'd have been a go-n-e gosling," remarked Shanks, as they came into the dining-room a couple of hours later and received the hearty congratulations of the rest of

the troupe, the most of whom had been present and witnessed their acts of daring bravery.

"Pshaw, dat warn't nuthin'," said the kid to the party that had gathered around him and were complimenting him for his pluck and willingness.

"Wasn't nothing, hey? when there was five thousand grown men standing there afraid to risk it. Wasn't nothing for a little shaver your size to come to the front, and dashing into the jaws of death, rescue an old man? 'Tain't in my line much to blow, but I tell you, little one, it was something to be proud of till the day you die," said Dave Reed, patting him on the head.

"Yes, der kid showed he was game; but den, if a feller's got der grit an' means ter be squar', it's boun' ter com' out on 'im lik' der measles som' time," remarked Shorty, proudly.

Crowded, jammed, packed, wedged and stuffed, was the Salt Lake theater that evening; seats full, passageways full, standing room full, persons who had never attended the theater before turned out to have a look at the plucky little hero whose name and deeds were on every tongue; and when in response to repeated and not to be denied calls, he came before the footlights, his reception was one such as was never before tendered to a Gentle in that Mormon city.

The men stood up, waved their hats and cheered, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs and applauded the comical-looking little shaver, who stood bowing his thanks before them.

"Dere, kid, dat'll do; back yerself off now, an' let der show bile ahead; dem folks out dere 'd keep yer 'fore 'em till ter-morrow," whispered Shorty, from one of the wings, and a moment later he was joined by the boy, and the performance proceeded as usual. The next morning, as Shorty and his boy were leaving the breakfast-table, a waiter handed the former a card.

"Wher' d'yer show der gentlemen in ter?" he asked the waiter.

"Private parlor, sah."

Taking the kid by the hand, Shorty ascended the stairs, entered his private parlor, and found himself in the presence of the old gentleman whom he had helped the kid to save from a horrible death the day previous, and who, advancing, held out both hands, while he poured out his thanks in trembling tones.

"Cheese all dat, sir; I didn't do but a plaguey little, an' dat yer welcome ter, fer I'd do it fer any feller dat I saw in a tight place. Der kid 'ere was der chicken dat foun' yer, brought yer back ter Me, watched yer, an' helped ter get yer back ter yer

friends, by haulin' up a rope ter lower yer," said Shorty.

"My brave little child, I owe my life to you, then—"

"Oh, dat's all right, mister. I'se lik' dad—I'se allus willin' ter sail in and drag out 'f I can get a chance," interrupted the kid.

"Well, at least, let me offer you, as a slight reward, this check. I am wealthy, and—"

"Hol' on, boss, yer've struck der wrong shop. Stick yer stamps back in yer pocket; der kid nor me ain't sellin' any good turn dat we may do a feller. We're a heap 'bliged ter yer, but yer must 'scuse us from dirtyin' our fingers wid money ter pay for dirtyin' dem wid burnt boards and cinders," interrupted Shorty, pushing back the proffered check.

"But, at least, let me give it to the boy—"

"Dad an' me's got 'nuff stamps ter giv' us a bully ol' time, an' dat's all I wants, mister," said Shorty Junior, and the money matter having been put to rest, they sat down and had a long and earnest talk, parting warm friends an hour later.

"Pack up, boys; der train leaves at ten sharp," said Shorty, next morning, an' there was the usual swearing, stuffing, cramming, hunting up of missing articles, rushing, hurrying, sweating, jamming, stamping on the trunk lids, locking of locks that wouldn't lock, and general excitement and agony that accompanies an order to travel on short notice; but by the time the baggage-wagon showed up everything was all O. K., and the troupe were cooling their throats with good-bye sherry cobbler and claret punches, and wondering why it was they had allowed themselves to be worked into such a fever heat.

Quite a party had assembled at the depot to see them off, and as the train moved away they were treated to three hearty cheers, which they returned.

The run over the Union Pacific Railroad to Omaha, where they were billed to perform next, was a pleasant but quiet one, Shorty and Shanks taking the kid out on to the rear platform and instructing him in the use of a tiny pistol they had bought for him, and which he soon got into the hang of using so well as to leave his teachers in the shade. The rest of the troupe amused themselves in the old manner, telling stories, playing euchre, singing snatches of songs, and coddling each other or any "fresh" person they could pick up.

On the arrival of the train in Omaha, Shorty and his company found themselves besieged by a rabble of hotel runners, railroad ticket agents, hackmen, clothing-house drummers, baggage-smashers, porters, stage-drivers, gaping citizens, and boarding-house keepers.

"We don't require any tickets as I mentioned to you previously," remarked Shanks, as he choked an agent up against a telegraph pole.

"Excuse me to-day, but leave me your address," said Dave Reed, as he booted a boarding-house keeper under the coat-tail for buzzing him to death.

"I'm extremely obliged for your kindness, but as we have a stage waiting we won't require your back, as I've told you four times before," observed Tambo, as he lifted a fellow who was annoying him delicately under the ear with his fist.

"Swim out, my covey. Yer too fresh, better tak' a polker 'round der block an' see 'f yer can't pick up som' flat lik' yerself," chinned the kid to a ticket agent, who insisted upon carrying him.

After a hand-to-hand jostle and jawing match Shorty and his company succeeded in making their way through the rabble and finding the stage for the Wyoming Hotel, at which place rooms had been secured for them by their advance agent, who was once more on the road.

Having indulged in a bully old dinner, Shorty, Shanks and our little hero took a spin through the city, calling first at the Academy of Music and inspecting it.

"Omaha ain't much of a show town, so I's'pose we'll be doin' bully 'f we fill der house for der few nites we're goin' ter tie up 'ere," said Shorty, as he ran his eyes over the long rows of empty seats.

"I should say, yes sir—ee horse and horse-fly," said Shanks.

"Well, le's mosey 'tany rate; dere's a heap too much of a grave-yard by moonlight 'bout an empty theater ter suit me," answered his little friend, leading the way out of the building.

After visiting all the places worth seeing in the city, climbing Capitol Hill, and gazing over the splendid view of the Missouri River and Iowa shore spread before them, they descended, and were returning to the city by another route, when they stumbled upon a large corral, in which several Mexican *vaqueros* were endeavoring to break in a herd of wild, snorting, kicking mustangs, which they had driven across the plains.

"Dem's worse ter ride dan circus mules. I tell yer what, pard, a feller mite as well try ter ride a slippery eel as one of dem shorters," observed Shorty.

"I rather straddle a streak of lightning," replied Shanks, as he watched the mustangs plunge, rear, fall backwards, spring up and dash madly and wickedly around the inclosure.

"I's'pose yer gets hold on som' dat can't be riddin' som' times," remarked Shorty to the owner of the herd, who was standing close to them.

"Not often; them greasers can ride most everything that'll carry them, but they met their boss the other day in that fellow," answered the other, pointing to a small, magnificently made black mustang,

that stood in one corner, and with head and tail erect, seemed to dare any one to approach him.

"What's der reason dey couldn't ride 'im?" asked Shorty Junior, suddenly.

"Because he kicks, my bantam," said the man, pleasantly.

"Is dat all?" queried the kid.

"Oh, no, that ain't the commencement. He bites till you'd think he'd tear a person in pieces; bucks till he sends a man flying up in the air like a kite; rears, pitches forward, rolls over on the ground and tries to crush his rider; takes the bit in his teeth and darting away brushes his rider off against something; in fact, he's a very born devil on four legs, and there ain't a man between Maine and 'Frisco can ride him," explained his owner.

"I'll bet I can ride 'im for stamps, if dad'll stick up the sugar," said the kid, quietly.

"You ride him? Why, infant, he'd kill you in two minutes," laughed the man.

"Dad, jess give me a show dis once. I never seed der ting yet I couldn't stick ter. Stick up a hundred 'gainst der hoss, an' 'f I don't fotch 'u ter time, yer can sell me fur soapfat ter der fust bloke dat'll buy me," chirped the kid, catching hold of his dad's hand.

"Dat's nuff, chip. Der boy says he can ride dat nag of yours, an' I'll stick up a hundred 'gainst der hoss dat he can," said Shorty.

"You ain't surely going to let the boy mount that untamed devil? Are you crazy?" demanded Shanks.

"You bet I jest am. Der boy says he can straddle 'im, and der boy knows his biz, an' his dad's backin' 'im wid his last nickel—*savey?*" replied Shorty, quietly, but firmly.

"Oh, if you want to ride him you're welcome, only don't blame me for any broken collar bones. As for the money, I don't want to rob any one of their wealth. I'll bet you or I'll give the boy the brute if he rides him, and if he don't you are to pay for oyster suppers to-night for the party," said the owner of the black.

"Done," said Shorty.

"Here, Gonzales, catch that black!" ordered the boss, and a few minutes later the king of the herd was struggling to free himself from the coils of a choking lasso.

"Put on der bridle an' strap der saddle tight," said the kid.

"Now give me a whip and a pair of spurs."

"Be careful, chipps, an' don't let 'em catch yer nappin'," advised Shorty, as he lifted his tiny mite of a son into the saddle, while it required the united strength of two men to hold the maddened animal quiet.

"Are you ready?" asked the owner.

"Let 'im gush!" answered Shorty Junior, and the men, springing away from his head, left him free.

For a moment the black stood still, then, with a mighty leap he sprang forward, tossing his head; then bracing his feet, he suddenly stopped, trying to hurl his little rider over his head.

"Dat's too thin for a feller dat's rode a circus mule," laughed the kid, and he drove the spurs into his untamed steed, till he sprang high in the air and dashed away, plunging, rearing, kicking bolting, and bucking around the corral.

"Merciful heavens! the child will be dashed to pieces!" exclaimed the owner of the black, as he saw that maddened animal plunging madly towards the fence with the intention of crushing his little rider's leg against it.

"Don't yer fret; der boy's all hunk; he knows his biz, yer bet," said Shorty, as he saw his son coolly toss his leg over the saddle, and at the same time fetch the horse several sharp cuts across the ears with his whip.

"Hurrah! Well done, bantam; you're a trump!" shouted the man, as he saw the kid send the steed flying around the yard a few minutes later like an arrow out of a bow.

Ten minutes afterwards Shorty Junior reined up the black, now a white foaming animal, before his father and said, as the latter lifted him off on to the ground:

"Dere, yer see, I've ridden yer hoss. He's mos' too lively fur ladies ter ride yet; but it ain't bad fun for a feller dat knows his biz up ter der handle."

"He's yours, boy, and I tell you he's found his boss, for you're the pluckiest little *vaquero* living," said the man, and, calling one of the men, he sent the horse to be taken care of till Shorty should send for him.

There was a rousing house gathered to welcome the New York Minstrels that evening. The city had been well billed, their coming duly heralded, and the papers, getting hold of the account of the Salt Lake fire, had copied it, with accounts of Shorty and the kid's bravery, so that all Omaha felt a desire to greet the little hero, and turned out solid, giving him an enthusiastic reception when he appeared before the footlights.

CHAPTER XX.

OUR readers will remember that we left our tiny friend Shorty Junior enjoying an enthusiastic reception from the boys of Omaha.

"Dere's der boy wot saved der man from bein' burnt up!" yelled a bootblack in the gallery.

"Ain't he a hummer, though?"

"None of your slouches 'bout that little coon."

"But you bet he's there every pop that he's wanted."

"But, Jimminy Gripes, what a little covey he is."

"Dat's a fac', fellers. I ain't much of a giant, but der little dere is of me is tuff an' true," answered the kid, glancing up in the direction the voice had come from.

"Oh, you'll do."

"We don't want yer any bigger."

"F any big fellers giv' yer any sass while yer in Omaha, yer jest send for Ike, der buffer, and 'f I don't bust dere crust for dem yer can souse my hoofs for pigs' feet," offered a thick-set, bullet-headed boy in the front row.

"Guess you was big enough to do the work at the Salt Lake fire," called out a boy from a printing office, and his remark called forth another storm of applause from the audience.

"Dat warn't nuthin', fellers, 'cause yer see fires is one of my best grips, an' I allus sorter lets myself loose at 'em," said Shorty Junior, comically.

"Same as you do at horse races in California," said a voice.

"Der hoss was ter blame for carryin' dis innercent hairpin in fust. I didn't run, it was der hoss," laughed the kid, as he bowed himself off the stage amidst cheers and shouts of laughter.

That evening as Shorty, Shanks and the boy were making their way back to the hotel from the theater, Shorty remarked:

"By der way, chips, I had dat black mustang pony yer wot fetched down ter der stable 'ere, an' I got yer as nobby a saddle and rig out as I could scare up; but I don't want yer ter be scootin' 'round der country on 'im till I'se satisfied he's quiet. *Fer sta?*"

"Nuff sed, dad, and I'm dead loads 'bliged ter yer," answered the kid.

"I'll back the boy to ride an' tame a hurricane after yesterday's performance," observed Shanks.

"Sticks on tighter dan a wet postage stamp," said Shorty.

"Oh, me an' der nag'll get 'long stavin', dad. I wouldn't give a kick on der shins for a pony dat couldn't jump over a five-rail fence, kick a fly off a feller's eyebrow, bite der buttons off his coat an' bust up a camp-meetin' in seven seconds," chimed in Shorty Junior.

"If that's your style I'll be hanged if I don't think you've got the very animal to fill the bill," laughed Shanks.

"F I was goin' ter drive der plug in a hearse an' tend funerals for a livin', I'd go in for a pokey hoss wid a solemn tail, 'cause I'se 'fraid dat buckshot I was on yesterday 'd kick a hole in der hearse, flop der coffin out an' waltz thro' der mourners on his hind legs wid a funeral plume stickin' in his ear," said the kid.

"I'll stretch yer ear, yer young rascal, till it feels like an elephant's, if yer don't keep quiet," said Shorty laughingly; and a moment later they reached the hotel, and after paying a visit to the billiard hall, and knocking the balls around for half an hour, they concluded to retire.

Next morning found our party up betimes, and having hid a good square meal away under their clothing, the question came up of what to do with themselves.

"I vote for a trip across the river and a squint at Council Bluffs," proposed Shanks, offering his cigar-case to his little chum.

"I'm 'clined for a balloon 'scursion 'f I could get hold of a stray balloon," laughed Shorty.

"An' I don't vote for neither of dose tickets. I vote for yer ter tak' dis huckleberry up ter der Injun camp ter see dem. Yer and dad can tak' a buggy an' a team of wind splitters an' I'll gum myself on ter der mustanger," said Shorty Junior, pertly.

"Dat's not a bad idea, kid, an' I don't keer 'f I do vote for dat," assented Shorty.

"Suits me to a T. T. T. Anything for fun, as the man said when he hit another over the head with the tongs," observed Shanks.

"Den I'll tend ter getting the nags," said Shorty, hurrying off to order the pony to be saddled and a pair of clipping good horses to be harnessed to a buggy.

"Shure, he's the devil entirely," said a stableman, on the party entering the stable-yard fifteen or twenty minutes later.

"Bad cess to him for a biting, kicking baste. Ain't he after scrunching the shoulder off me own first cousin, Mike McCarthy," broke in another groom.

"An' troth and he kicked the wind out of a naygur as foine as iver ye see," added a helper.

"Jist look at him now, sur, but don't stand forinist him, for he'd ate you in a howl minit. Shure which of the gentlemen's going to be after riding the creature?" said the head groom, putting in an appearance, in hopes of a fee, and pointing as he spoke to where the mustang, ready saddled, stood tossing his magnificent mane and tail, and trying the muscles of two men who were holding him.

"I reckon I'se de jumpin'-jack dat's goin' ter de the ridin' part of de biz," said Shorty Junior, stepping forward, and standing in front of the snorting beast.

"Murther in Irish! The choild'll be kilt dead!" exclaimed the groom, raising his hands in horror.

"Guess not, Mister Man. Hello, penny, don't yer kno' me, ol' feller?" asked the kid, and the animal, at the sound of his voice, pricked his ears forward, snuffed his clothes, let his face be stroked, and then with a low neigh of recognition, he stood perfectly quiet and allowed Shorty to lift the little rider into the saddle.



As Shorty Jr. crawled from under the basket, the terrified darkey sprang from his seat and put down the road like a deer.

"Faix, that hates St. Patrick and the snakes!" exclaimed the hostler, who had been watching them open-mouthed.

"That horse knows him like a fresh-licked school boy does his alphabet," said Shanks.

"Dat plug ain't goin' ter forget who com' out boss yesterday in a hurry; I tell yer he's a rattler, ain't he?" replied Shorty, as he climbed into the buggy, and they started briskly down the road, the kid, mounted on his mustang, curvetting and prancing alongside.

Half an hour's rapid driving brought them to the Indian encampment, and five minutes after their arrival they were surrounded by all the redskins importing them to purchase beadwork, bows and arrows, and notions.

"Shooter tene cente from stickee," said a buck, pointing to a stick some twenty-five yards distant.

"Le's see yer hit dis den," said Shorty, walking over to the stick and putting a silver quarter into a little slit in the top of it.

"Twang!" went the Indian's bow, a second later, and the silver quarter flew whirling away, struck fairly by the steel-pointed arrow.

"Me brave. Me shoote tene cente 'way far," said another, who appeared to be a small chief, coming forward and setting the target half as far away again.

"I'll invest a quarter in that," observed Shanks, placing it in the notch.

The Indian carefully selected an arrow from his deer hide quiver that lay against his lodge, and fitting it to his bow and standing erect, threw up the bow, and without apparently taking any aim, let fly, and the quarter was observed flying through the air.

"Dat's shootin', pard, no beefsteak. Lordy, wouldn't I streak it 'f I had one of dem fellers arter me wid a bow an' arer," remarked Shorty, laughingly.

"Me rider; nice pony," said the chief, coming over to where Shorty Junior, sat on his mustang.

"Yer ride nuthin. "Why, dis plug'd stan' yer on yer ear in less time dan it takes a tadpole ter wag its tail," replied the kid.

"Oh, me big chief; me ridee; heap big injun; muchy brave," said the chief.

"You'd be muchy glad to walk if yer tries ter ride dis pony," answered Shorty Junior.

"You let big chief ridee, ugh," coaxed the Indian.

"Let 'im try 'f yer wants ter; he'll only get der gran' bounce," said Shorty to the kid.

"I'd rather be a freshly-lit skyrocket than I would be him," grinned Shanks.

"Here yer be, den, an' 'f yer ain't der wust sucked in injun in der west yer can use me for a goose-feed-

er for the rest of my life," said the boy, slipping off and handing the bridle to the chief.

"Nicee pony; goodde ridee," grunted the Indian, swinging himself into the saddle with a bound, amidst the applause of his tribe.

"Yup, go! Yup hee, goh!" he exclaimed, as soon as he felt himself seated in the saddle.

The mustang, who had stood as quiet and still during the exchange of riders as if he had been carved out of marble, started when he heard the strange voice, and with a weird snort of terror, he sprang forward with a few rapid bounds, then, arching his back like a cat, he stopped short, sending the unfortunate chief flying headfirst through the air.

"Not so muchee ridee as formerly," said the kid, as he caught the bridle of the pony, and they roared with laughter as they watched the Indian crawling up, after plowing up the grass with his nose and chin.

"High ugh, mucky mucky, want ter try 'im agin?" laughed Shorty, as he saw the Indian scrambling to his feet, and staring around blankly.

"Me ridee damnee. No good pony; heap pitchee, big chief ridee, ugh!" exclaimed the redskin, throwing off his blanket and approaching the mustang. Knowing that if he did not succeed in mastering the animal, he would forever lose caste in the tribe.

"Want ter try 'im agin, hey? Dis time I spect he'll pitch yer so high dat yer'll mak' a hole in der clouds," said Shorty.

"I think it'll be big chief stand on his headee," remarked Shanks.

"Bounce 'im, scalpy, an' yer bet yer moccasins he'll bounce yer in return," grinned Shorty Junior.

"Ugh! poh! me ridee," grunted the chief, making a leap to get in the saddle, but just then the mustang moved ahead, and the Indian came down kerflumix on the ground.

"Ki, owoshoki!" he yelled, jumping up as mad as seventeen hornets that had been tickled with a stick, while our party fairly shook themselves with laughter.

The next time the redskin approached the mustang carefully, watched his opportunity and succeeded, with the assistance of one of the tribe, in getting mounted, then seizing the bridle reins with a great flourish he dug his heels into the pony's sides, and gave a yell of triumph, which died away into a groan of terror, as the mustang, after standing up straight on his hind legs for a few minutes, dropped down again with a thud that loosened every joint in his rider's body, and then bounding forward, kicked up behind and shot the unlucky chief through the opening of one of the lodges and into the fire-place where

the dinner was cooking, and the next moment the pony, as if feeling that he owed the whole tribe a grudge, galloped in amongst them, kicking, pawing, biting and scattering bucks, braves, squaws, warriors, chiefs, papposes and medicine men helter skelter in every direction.

"Christopher Columbus! my ribs are sore from laughing!" roared Shanks, as he looked at fat squaws and grave, dignified warriors turning somersaults over each other, while the mustang amused himself by kicking chiefs and bucks as hard as if their rank was equal; shaking papposes and medicine men with his teeth, and demolishing the whole village as if an earthquake had struck it.

"Dere goes muchy ridee!" shouted the kid, as the chief darted out of the lodge in a half roasted condition, from rolling head over heels in the burning cinders of the fire-place.

"Big chief, wanty ridee," said Shorty, as he rushed past them.

"Ugh! d—n!" yelled the unlucky redskin, galloping madly off towards a creek in the rear of the village.

"Look a dere, dad!" called out the kid, pointing to an old squaw that the mustang had kicked headforemost into a chief's stomach, and the latter was now dancing around in agony, with both hands pressed over the injured spot.

"Dat'll do 'im more good dan a mustard plaster," laughed Shorty, and having caught the mustang, Shorty Junior, mounted him, and bidding farewell to the Indian village, they drove back to town, laughing heartily over their racket.

After having played to bang-up houses for the rest of their stay in Omaha, the troupe received the order to pack up and get ready to dust to Indianapolis, where they had been heralded to appear through the press and billposter.

"Once more we're pointin' our noses towards sunrise," remarked Shorty, as they dumped themselves down in one of the Chicago and Rock Island cars.

"That shows that we knows our biz," replied Shanks, fanning himself with his hat.

"Whoever spits out such a 'bomnible joke, spot 'im on der shoot."

"Or paste 'im in der snoot, dad," said Shorty Junior.

"Hold on, fellows, I've got one to ask you. Why's the town we're going to like a sleepy headed redskin?" asked Dave Reed.

"Cause he can't climb a tree," suggested Shanks.

"Cause Barnum's hunting up Charley Ross," said Tambo.

"Cause Russia has got Kars as well as dis railroad," grinned Shorty.

"'Cause der longest pole knocks down der persimmons," lisped the kid, comically.

"Because you're a lot of blamed idiots, I s'pose I'll have to tell you," laughed Dave Reed. "Well, it's like a sleepy-headed redskin 'cause it's Indianapolis."

"Open der car door som' one an' let der cool air fan dis man's fevered brow," shouted Shorty.

"Where's the nearest lunatic asylum located?" asked Shanks.

"Send for a coroner. Let's cut 'im open and see if dere's any more bad jokes like that left in him," suggested Shorty.

"You fellows can cod away till you catch a fresh fish. I'm going to sleep," laughed Dave, and settling himself in his seat, he closed his eyes lazily.

"Dat's my grip, too," said Shorty, and the rest of the troupe, following his example, stretched themselves out and killed part of the journey by a sound nap.

"Change cars for Indianapolis!" yelled the conductor, waking them up with a start.

"What's der use of changin' dis one suits me 'zactly," said Shorty, innocently.

"But you'll be left," explained the conductor.

"Bat wouldn't be right."

"Are you a born fool?" shouted the man of fares, getting excited.

"I dunno. Are you?"

"Get out of this car before I fire you out!" exclaimed the now angry conductor.

"I thort yer was der conductor, but 'pears yer der fire-man," said Shorty, wittily.

"Are you going to leave?"

"I ain't a tree, consequently I don't hav' ter leave. Dyer twig dat jibe. If yer do, bow," coddled Shorty, getting up slowly and moving out after the rest of the troupe.

"It's a wonder that fellow didn't club you for chinning him," said Shanks, as they squatted themselves in the poorly-equipped cars of the Indianapolis Railroad.

"I'd a made 'im tink he was a titenin' conductor in a thunderstorm 'f he had."

"Ice water for two, and a pink straw for the ladies. Shorty's made a joke and somebody ought to conduct him out into the fresh air," laughed Shanks.

"Money, gentlemen," said the new conductor.

"Can't we tick-et on dis route?" asked Shorty, pulling out the pasteboards from his pocket.

The conductor smiled a sickly smile, and said, as he punched them:

"I'll treat this party to a punch."

"As I don't keer 'bout bein' punched, yer can fetch me a tender peanut on ice," said the kid.

"And a straw to suck it through," chimed in Tambo.

"Dyer want ter mak' me out ter be a sucker?" grinned the kid.

"Maybe you didn't suck those Indians in with your mustang. Oh, you're a regular chip of the old block," answered Tambo, and a broad smile stole over the faces of Shorty, Shanks and the boy, as they thought over the affair.

Coddling, joking, and laughing in this manner, the time slipped by so rapidly that they were surprised when the conductor threw open the door, and shouted:

"Indianapolis!"

"Baker House?" inquired a sunburned native, with a red nose and an immense badge.

"Dat's der dough for dis crowd," replied Shorty, following him to Louisianco Street, where they found a stage awaiting them.

A nice suite of apartments had been set apart for them at the hotel, and after overhauling their toilets and stowing away a good dinner, Shorty and Shanks, accompanied by the kid, strolled out for a ramble around the city.

"Ho, boy, I'll be honeyswoggled if 'ere been't a chap 'tain't no bigger dan a pickle bottle!" shouted a country boy.

"Wal, I s'wore he been't Tom Thumb, be he?" asked the other, running across the street, and regarding our little hero with staring eyes and open mouths.

"By gum, I'll bet you a mushmelon that he's one of them show sellers that's coomin' 'ere," remarked a third, hitching up his blue overalls.

"Say, fellers, I'd lik' ter hire dem moufs of yers for cellars, ter keep taters in," said the kid.

"I'll be degoned if he can't talk!" giggled one of the rustics.

"And give sarse too," said another.

"He'd better not say noffin' to me or I'll mow him all to bits," chimed in the third.

"Say, hadn't yer softies better swim out 'fore it's over yer head? Tak' a waltz hom' ter der farm an' help yer granny ter chaw beans for der mornin's hash. 'Fi was as green as yer I'd hide under der barn 'feared der cows 'd scoop me in," said Shorty Junior saucily, as they walked away.

Their first visit was to the Union Depot, where they found that the mustang, which had been railroaded on in a box car, had arrived and been transferred to a livery stable. From the depot they took a spin up to the Academy of Music and had a glimpse of its seating capacity, stage and things in general.

"It's a bully good little ranche, and 'f der folks only turn out an' fill it, it'll suit me lik' a fat frog does an alligator—all ter smitherens—but I don't tak' much stock in dis town. It's ter slow; dere ain't any of der New York get up an' howl, pitch in an' drag out sort of life," remarked Shorty, squinting around.

"Oh, I don't know; I've got an idea by the tail that it may pan out hunky," replied Shanks.

"Can't we start some hoodlum racket, dad, dat'd catch der dimes?" asked the kid, sagely.

"Dat's jest what I was thinkin' 'bout, chips; but dey all 'pears ter be so sleepy-headed and slouchy dat I ain't seed der ghost of a show yet," said his paternal, quickly.

"I'll keep my eyes skinned, an' if anythin' turns up yer bet, gov'ner, I'll snatch it by der eyebrows!"

Just as they were leaving the theater a dakkey drove up with a farm wagon containing half a dozen empty baskets, and, halting in front of the building, jumped out and ran into a saloon for a drink.

"Hol' on, dad, an' I'll show yer some fun," said the kid, darting over and secreting himself under one of the bushel baskets.

A few minutes later the darkey came gliding out, smiling and wiping his lips, and, mounting the wagon, was in the act of driving off, when a voice shouted:

"Hol' on dere!"

"Whoa dar!" said the darkey, bringing his team to a stop and looking around.

"Come over yere; I want ter see yer," said the voice, and the negro flew around on his seat as if it worked on a pivot, and stared to the right and left.

"Com', stir yer stumps," observed the mysterious voice, and the darkey pulled off his dilapidated straw hat, and scratched his woolly head.

"Back up!" said Shorty Junior, from under the basket.

"All right, boss, but dis yeah 'fair ain't 'zactly clar ter dis nig's understanin'. I'se in a sorter hurry, boss, an' if yer'll scuse me, I guess mebbe I'd better be gwine," answered the bewildered driver, gazing around, after having backed his team up to the walk.

"Pay for dat drink yer got!"

"Fore de Lord! I clar ter goodness I did, boss."

"Der money was bad."

"Shuah, boss; 'cause dat money was gib ter me by der ol' woman ter buy corset lacin's wid," exclaimed the dark, solemnly.

"Go 'head, den."

But no sooner had the darkey started his team ahead, than a voice behind him shouted:

"Stop wher' yer be, or I'll hav' yer in jail 'fore yer kno' it."

"Yes, sah, I'll stop, sah!" exclaimed the darkey, reining up shortly and looking around; failing to find anyone, he continued: "Elder dat drink dat I tuk in dat s'loon was pow'ful strong, or else dere's spirits loaffin' 'roun' dis nig; fust it's go 'head, den it's 'hol' on, an' der wust of it is dat dere's no one 'roun' 'tail."

"Now, den, back der wagin up an' tak' out der tail board so's I can get in," said the kid.

"Dat settles it, an' I'se a gone nig; back up de wag-on ter let a ghost in!" moaned the darkey.

"If yer don't mind me, I'll com' an' wind my arms 'round yer."

"Not much yer won't, if dis nig can help it!" shouted the terrified darkey, springing from his seat and rushing down the street bare-headed, while Shorty Junior crawled out from under the basket and joined his dad and Shanks, who were laughing fit to kill themselves over the racket.

There was a ripping good house assembled to meet the New York Minstrels that evening, the fame of the troupe having preceded them, and even Shorty was forced to confess that the boys of Indianapolis had turned out well. The performance was excellent and applauded to the echo. Shorty Junior, in a song and dance taught him by Dave Reed, was simply immense, and brought down the house.

"Dat kid's goin' ter mak' a rushin' ol' song an' dancier," remarked Shorty, as he watched the little shaver go through his performance.

"Song and dance? Why, that chick's going to be a boss at the business, if he only get's half a shake," answered Shanks, who was standing in one of the wings watching him.

"Well, he'll get all der show he wants. I'll tackle Dave ter-morrer an' hav' 'im teach der kid all he's up to; den when he gets East, I'll scare up der best of der bosses in dat line dere, an' let dem bounce 'im 'roun' till he's fixed," explained Shorty to his friend, and a few moments later they parted, as the former had to go upon the stage in his monkey act.

CHAPTER XXI.

MUCH better houses than even Shorty had looked for, greeted the New York Minstrels during their stay in Indianapolis. The reputation of the troupe and the comicalities and rackets of the two Shortys had floated ahead of them, and the farmers of the neighborhood made a regular picnic of their stay. Driving into the city with their families and a basket of luncheon, they attended each performance and nearly choked themselves to death with laughter and gingerbread. Shorty Junior was the favorite from the jump, especially amongst the ladies of the audience, who baked pies and gingerbreads big enough for him to have made a house of, and left them at the theater and hotel with the request that the poor little child might be allowed something to eat so that he'd grow.

"I'se eber so much 'bliged ter dem, but I ain't got but one stumjack an' dat ain't big as a wheelbarrow. I'll have ter weaken an' call der game," said the kid, on their return to the hotel one evening, to find a pie as big as a bandbox awaiting him.

"Guess dey tak' yer for a whole Sunday-school 'scursion; dem's der tuffest folks ter fill up dat's out; tak's more solid ol' grub for ter stuff a Bible-classer dan it does ter feed a cage of lions in a mernagerie, and der wusr of it is dat dey looks hungrier an' hollower dan ever after dey's thro'," remarked Shorty, humorously.

"You're as level-headed as a billiard-table, pard," laughed Shanks, throwing himself down carelessly on the sofa, and springing up again with the exclamation of:

"Suffering saints!"

"What in blazes is der riot now?" asked Shorty, as he saw his tall friend waltzing around the room with his coat-tails in his hands and a wild look of pain and anger struggling for the mastery in his countenance.

"Riot enough! Great Columbus, how'd you like to squat yourself in a dish of hot blackberry jam?" yelled Shanks, snatching a paper knife off the mantelpiece and scraping the hot jelly off his pants, while Shorty, overcome by the comicality of the affair, lay back in his chair and roared with laughter, in which the kid joined.

"That's some more fodder, I s'pose, for our grub-struck chick!" exclaimed Shanks, wildly.

A fresh roar of laughter was all the answer he received.

"Terrible funny, ain't it, to see a feller scald himself in some of your confounded old charity feeds?" he asked, excitedly.

"Was it hot?" inquired the kid, with a broad grin on his funny little face.

"I'd make it so hot for the person who put it there that he'd like to make a trial trip down below to get cool," replied Shanks, hauling off his trousers to exchange them.

He had just succeeded in relieving himself of his lower garments, and was turning to his wardrobe to take out another pair, when the door opened and a female voice exclaimed:

"Coom along, gals, I found the room. So coom rife in an' fetch your fixin's an' cookies."

"Illuminated lightning bugs!" yelled Shanks, giving one scared glance around, and then making a frantic dive for behind the bed, under which he crawled with a groan and the loss of a couple of inches of skin off his backbone.

"You see me and the gal's bin up to your show an' laughed till we'd like to bust, didn't we gals? An' beng as we coom to town to-night again, we fetched you some cakes, an' thort we'd like to call on you; 'feared you'd be sorter lonesome," explained the old lady.

"Tank yer; 'low me ter pass yer som' chairs," answered Shorty.

There was a low groan from under the bed, and the girls started and looked around.

"Dat's nuthin' 'cept a loose board. Just flounce yerselves down an' spend der evening, an' we'll hav' lots of fun," said Shorty, grinning to himself at the thought of Shanks' predicament.

A deep sigh was heard, and the old lady, after putting on her spectacles and glancing around, observed:

"I hope you don't keep no ghosts or goblin' things round you?"

"No ma'am-e-e! We ain't on der ghost lay; we leave all dat ter der spiritool gangs an' stick ter der burnin' cork," replied Shorty.

"That's right, for the gals an' me are dreadful 'feared of speerits, beent we, gals?"

The girls in question, a pair of plump, buxom lasses of sixteen and eighteen potato-bug seasons, shrugged their fair shoulders, rolled their eyes up like ducks in a thundershower, drew long breaths in and gasped in chorus.

"Oh beent we!"

"An' now how shall we spend der ebening? What d'yer all say ter som' kind of fun?"

The girls giggled, and the old lady smiled her willingness to enter into any game.

"Now, den, what shall it be?" asked Shorty, when the girls had removed their bonnets.

"How'd hide-an'-go-seek pan out, pop?" asked the kid.

"Splendid," said the girls, in one breath.

"Der very ting, an' I'll be it fust; now yer can hide any place yer want ter in dese two rooms while I counts a squar' hundred," cried Shorty, while a broad grin stole over his comical old mug as he heard his chum under the bed mumble:

"Great heavens! how I wish I was a long-tailed mouse, or a brown bedbug, that wouldn't require any pantaloon's."

"Now, den, scoot it, an' hide yerselves, an' gly' a whoop when yer all fixed," said Shorty, pretending to hide his face in a chair, but keeping his weather-eye peeled to see the fun.

"Where you going to hide?" asked one of the girls.

"I think I'll take the closet; let's hurry," answered her sister. "Where you going to stow?"

"Oh, I'm sure I don't know."

"I'll tell yer wher' dere's a hunky place?" whispered Shorty Junior.

"Where, where?"

"Jess yer scramble under dat bed an' lay low, an' der ol' man'll never tumble ter yer," advised the kid.

"I'll go, but don't you ever tell," whispered the



"Scoot it, Mister Shanks!" yelled the kid, who had perched himself on the mantel-piece and was enjoying the fun.

girl, and tripping across the room, she stooped down, and before Shanks could divine her purpose, she had crawled under the bed and was pawing around to make herself comfortable, when she accidentally touched Shanks, and the next moment you would have thought there was a bear fight going on under that couch. Shrieks, yells, curses, apologies, groans, moans, sobs, explanations, and the next moment a man and a girl were seen scrambling out from under the bed, and darting around the room like a couple of raving lunatics.

"Oh, you villain! My daughter! my daughter!" screamed the old lady, charging over at Shanks.

"Madam," cried Shanks, "just let me—" "Don't you dare to madam me, you wretch!" exclaimed the old lady, trying to snatch Shanks by the nose.

"But how in thunder could"—

"I'll thunder you, you vagabond. To think you'd dare appear before a daughter of mine in that manner!" yelled the old woman, chasing him around the center-table and jumping over the lounge to get hold of him.

"Darn you and your daughters! Let me get my trousers!" roared Shanks, as he dodged about the room.

"Oh! oh! oh!" screamed the girls, hiding their blushing faces in their hands.

"Fie, fie, Shanks!" grinned Shorty, who had been shaking himself with convulsions of laughter.

"I'll tear every hair in your head out, you monster, you!" roared the old lady, trying to get her long enemy up in a corner, but Shanks scampered over the bed and called back:

"For heaven's sake, let me get my"—

"Oh, you base fellow! My poor daughters! My daughters!" she interrupted.

"Skin it, Mister Shanks. She's a glidin' for yer wool. Streak it, or she'll nab' yer!" yelled the kid, who had perched himself up on the mantel-piece and was enjoying the fun and urging on first one and then the other.

"The devil fly away with you and your daughters! It's my pants I want," answered Shanks, trying to get to his wardrobe; but being headed off by the old woman, he took refuge behind the sofa.

"Slip down stairs an' tell der landlord dat dere's a lot of 'scaped loonyticks got inter my room, and dat I want him ter fetch up his help an' capture dem. Dy'er, savey?" whispered Shorty to the kid as he lifted him down from the mantel-piece.

"I see fly, ol' un!" answered the shaver, winking his eye comically and skipping out of the door.

"Merciful heavens, woman! ain't you going to let

me dress myself?" demanded Shanks from behind the sofa.

"I'll dress you, you scoundrel!"

"Oh, I shall faint, I know I will!"

"I'll die! I'll die!" screamed the girls, getting up and hiding their blushing noses on each other's shoulders.

"Say, Shanks, why didn't yer let us know dat yer was under dere?" asked Shorty, innocently.

"Oh, I'll pay you up for this. I'll get square—see if I don't," shouted Shanks, making another shirt-tail dive for the wardrobe, closely pursued by the old lady, who, in chasing him ran into the girls and set them shouting at the top of their lungs, just as the door was shoved wide open, and the landlord, followed by half a dozen citizens rushed into the room, and stood for a moment gazing around.

We will drop a curtain over the explanations that followed. Shorty had with his usual cuteness slipped out the moment the door was opened, leaving the others to explain matters as best they could. How the affair was eventually settled and the visitors got rid of, he never exactly learned, for though Shanks, after it was all over, took it all in good part, still one could easily see it was a tender spot, that he didn't care to be touched upon.

"Dad," said the kid, the next morning, "I wish yer'd let me give der pony a scoot dis mornin'. We're both itchin' for a run."

"'Feard yer'll have ter scratch yerself some oder way dan hoss-ridin' den, for I've got heaps of t'ings ter tend ter ter-day, an' biz is biz, yer know," answered Shorty, looking up from a letter he was reading.

"Sugar, guv; can't I waltz 'im out jes' as good 'lone 'sif yer was speeling 'longside me in a buggy? Yer ort ter have took it in by dis time dat I ain't no slouch on der ride," coaxed the shaver.

"All right, chips, all right; only don't be gone long, an' don't let Buster (for that was the name they had christened the mustang by) chuck yer," answered Shorty, winding up, as he almost always did, in giving way to the boy.

"Never struck der hoss dat could do dat, dad. Well, I t'ink I'll skip over ter der stable an' get der men ter sling der saddle on ter 'im. So long, dad," said the kid, a few moments later.

"So long," answered his paternal; and the boy trotted over to the stable, sought out the hostler, had Buster led forth and saddled, and away he dashed, both horse and rider seeming to enjoy their holiday.

"Faix and troth that's the first time Dennis Sullivan iver knew dat monkeys could talk and ride. Begorra, it's a quare country intirely. The next thing

those grasshopping crathurs 'll be skipping up an' standin' up on their long, skinny back legs forninst me, ax me for the loan of a pipe of tobaky," soliloquized the hostler, as he watched the kid galloping off.

"Who took that black mustang out?" inquired the proprietor of the stable, coming in a few minutes later, and noticing the empty stall.

"Shure an' 'twas a monkey, sur," replied Dennis.

"A what?"

"No, not a phat, but a monkey all dressed up loike a human being."

"What in the dickens did you let him have him for? That horse belongs to Mr. Shorty."

"Bejabers, an' this one's short enough to suit any-thing."

"But the horse may be ruined."

"Divil a doubt of it. Shure, the loikes of that thing'd ruin a tombstone; he nearly made me cross-eyed in both feet lookin' at him," answered Dennis.

"Then why in thunder did you let him have the animal?" demanded the proprietor, angrily.

"Shure, an' he walked in here as bould as a two-tailed lion, cocked his wee ould head to one side, sez he:

"Rush out the mustang, Paddy!"

"The who?"

"Busther," sez he.

"Bust who?"

"I mane my plug," sez he.

"Shure, this ain't a hat shore?"

"Take a tumble," sez he.

"'Fhat'd I take a tumble for? Shure that's quare fun."

"Then he grinned till I thought the top of his head was coming off loike the lid of a snuff-box, and he walked in and pointed out the black, and towld me to saddle him, and when he was ready, saix he skipped on to him loike a daisy, and away wid him loike a fairy," explained the hostler, scratching his head and going back to his work, while his employer started over to the hotel to see Shorty and inform him of the occurrence.

In the meantime, Shorty Junior was having a bully old time. Once outside of the city, he let Buster, who had been fretting, prancing, and chafing under the restraint with which he was held back, have a free rein, and the splendid animal, tossing up his head, bounded forward like a shot, fairly spurning the earth with his feet, while his game little rider laughed, and leaning forward patted him on the neck.

"Oh, no, guess not; mebbe he aint a hummer on the go. Talk 'bout yer wind-splitters, why, he's der boss, dead sure. I wonder how he is on der jump. I t'ink I'll raise him ter der fust four rail fence dat I

strikes," laughed Shorty Junior as he sped along the road like an arrow from a bow.

"Now den, Buster, skip it!" he shouted, a few minutes later, turning the mustang's head fair at a four rail fence by the roadside.

Buster never slacked for a second his wonderful springing gallop, but as he neared the fence he gathered himself together and flew over it like a swallow, leaving some farmers, who were hoeing in the field, petrified with astonishment.

After a rousing old gallop through the country, Shorty Junior turned Buster's head toward home, and they were speeding down a smooth turnpike road like lightning, when the kid, chancing to glance ahead, saw a tollgate, a short distance in front of him.

"Now den for a lark. Go it, Buster, an' we'll stonish der natives out of a year's growth," chuckled the kid, and the mustang, encouraged and urged on by his rider's voice, fairly flew over the ground.

"Hi, thar! Hi! hi! hold on!" yelled the tollgatekeeper, running out and closing an enormous five bar oak gate.

"Golly, we're in for it! Five bars dis time, Buster, or we're busted ter flinders," said Shorty Junior, as he saw the gate shut before him. Then settling himself firmly in the saddle, he gathered the reins tighter in his tiny hands, closed his knees against his flying steed's sides and dashed straight at it.

"Turn him, or you'll be mashed to pieces! Great heavens! It's a child, and I've killed him!" screamed the gatekeeper, turning pale.

"Now, Buster, my bull, up yer go and over it is. Hoorah!" shouted the kid as the noble beast gathered his muscular body together like a cat, gave a mighty spring into the air, and the next moment had landed lightly on the other side and was galloping away as if leaping five-bar tollgates was an everyday performance.

"Yer'll hav' ter stick on anoder bar 'fore yer can collect any toll from dis turn-out—hey, Buster, my boy!" called back Shorty Junior as he rode away.

"Well, dod rot my picture! If that don't beat the devil and the Fourth of July rolled into one! Why, he warn't bigger than a stick of peppermint candy. Well, I'll swow to thunder!" exclaimed the astonished tollgatekeeper, and he went into the house and fanned himself with a bar of soap in his excitement.

Returning to the city Shorty Junior, reined up Buster and allowed him to walk quietly through the shaded streets and cool off before returning him to the stable.

He had stopped on the main street to speak to one of the troupe whom he met, when a crowd of Indianapolis boys gathered around and commenced coddling him.

"Say, monkey, how d'you get out of your cage?" said one.

"Get off that horse; we don't allow baboons to ride in this town!" jawed another.

"Why don't his mother put the baby to bed?" inquired a third.

"I'll bet he's been in a circus, and run away with the pony," suggested a cross-eyed boy.

"He can't put on any frills over us, that's what's the matter with Hannah," remarked an inky-fingered fellow.

"What's der matter wid yer snufflers? Don't yer get 'nuff ter eat, don't yer clothes fit yer, or are yer bodered wid worms?" asked the kid, coolly.

"Who's snufflers?"

"How d'you know I don't get enough to eat?"

"What's the matter with our clothes?"

"Who sed we had worms?" they demanded, angrily.

"Say, what's der use of yer workin' yerselves inter der prickly heat. Better take a spin around der block an' stop at som' pump, an' pump water over yerselves," said the kid.

"Let's bounce him!" exclaimed a big-headed fellow, who seemed to be a leader amongst them.

"Let's roll him in the mud!"

"Let's punch his head!"

"Haul him off the pony!"

"We'll learn him who he's sassin'!"

"Dirty little monkey, let's box his ears!"

"I'll give him all the pumping he wants!"

"I'll prickly heat him if I take hold of him once!" they yelled.

"I don't scare worth a cent, an' yer can't bluff me inter nuthin. I ain't so awful big, b' dere ain't one oftwice my size dat wants ter pick a muss wid me twice, for I'se tuffer dan whalebone an' I'll stan' more poundin' dan a mule," said the kid, defiantly.

"Let's chuck him off that pony!" shouted the leader.

"Yer'd better leave money ter pay yer funeral 'spences 'fore yer commence chuckin', 'cause dere's likely ter be a sudden death in yer famerly," said Shorty Junior.

"I'll tell you, fellers, let's all rush in on him at once and snatch him!" proposed a bull-necked boy, with a pug nose, and his proposition was accepted with a cheer by the crowd.

"Better cheese dat rush, you smarties!" warned the kid.

"Cheese nothing! Come, fellers, rush him down!" commanded the leader, and with an angry yell they rushed in a body upon our little hero, who would undoubtedly have been overpowered and pommelled had he not found an unexpected ally in Buster, who, suddenly dropping his head, let fly with both heels, scattering the gang in every direction, and knocking the wind out of every one he could reach.

"Owdy-ow-ow—I'm killed!" screamed the leader,

who had all the fight taken out of him by a square kick between the shoulders.

"I want to go home!" sobbed the bull-necked boy, who was sitting in the gutter nursing his shin.

"I wish'd to Solomon I'd let him alone," howled the cross-eyed boy, as he waltzed around with his hands on the seat of his pants.

"Any of yer fellers want ter rush it any more less lem'me know an' I'll com' 'round an' we'll hav' lots more fun. Da-da—ta-ta," chuckled the kid, and with a word he rode off, leaving the gang to console each other and gum sticking plaster over their wounds.

Two days later the New York Minstrels dropped the curtain on one of the most successful engagements ever held in that quiet city, and having got their duds packed, their bills paid and their good-byes said, they started once more on the road, bound for Nashville, Tenn., which was the next point at which they were billed to perform.

"Off at last. I hope I haven't forgot anything," said Shanks, as he dumped himself into a seat.

"I'll bet you der peanuts for us two dat yer did," answered the kid, who had perched himself up on top of a valise and was looking out of the window.

"Done. What was it I forgot?" inquired Shanks, after a short pause, during which he made a rapid mental inventory of his things.

"Yer forgot ter bid good bye ter der ol' lady an' gals dat called on yer at der hotel one night, dey'd—"

"Hish! that'll do. Call the peanut boy and I'll pay the racket," whispered Shanks, excitedly.

The train boy was summoned, the kid's pockets filled with peanuts, and that youngster, after bestowing a mysterious and comical wink on Shanks, took his place again by the window, where he amused himself by sucking in confiding strangers with handfuls of peanut shells.

The trip from Indianapolis to Nashville was a long, tedious and dusty one. The route lay through a fair farming country, but as the troupe were not much interested in grasshoppers or fertilizers, they amused themselves in their old way—playing cards, singing songs and cracking jokes.

They reached Nashville late in the evening, proceeded at once to the Stacy House, where apartments had been secured by their advance agent, and after a hearty supper they retired early, pretty well used up by their trip.

The boys were all up in good season next morning, and after doing justice to a well-cooked and served Tennessee breakfast, they started off in parties to have a look at the city, and amuse themselves as well as they could till dinner time.

"Let's me, yer an' der kid sail 'round far as der show-house fust, an' den we can tak' a spin anywhere yer please," said Shorty to his friend Shanks, as they stood on the hotel steps, and lit their smokers.

"Lead on, MacDuffy," answered his chum, and they moved away with the kid in tow.

On inspection they found the "New" Theater to be a nice, cosy place of amusement, centrally located and well-fitted up, with a good stage and dressing-rooms.

Leaving the theater, our party visited the capitol, one of the handsomest and finest buildings on the continent, and then returned to the hotel, where they laid off till dinner time.

"Nashville used ter hav' der reputashun of bein' a red-hot town for to show in, so I'spect dey won't go back on a gang lik' ours, for 'tain't every day dey can pick 'em up, d'yer hear me warbling?" said Shorty, as he entered the side-door of the theater.

He was right; the Nashville boys didn't go back on him, for when the rag was wrung up that evening the house was found ram-jam, packed full of a crowd that knew what good minstrelsy was, and expected it.

That they were not disappointed was best shown by the loud and continued applause that greeted each star.

But the kid capped the climax and carried off the honors with his song and dance of "Love Amongst the Roses," which he rendered capitally, bringing down the house in roars of laughter and shouts of applause.

"Fust ting I know dat coon'll win der belt, an' der ol' man'll hav' ter tak' a back seat in der buggy," laughed Shorty, as he listened to the cheers his youngster was evoking.

"Well, you know, he's a chip of the old block," said Dave Reed, who stood ready dressed to go on next act.

"Dat's so, but der ol' man's got ter scratch gravel ter hol' his own an' be der boss card if dat kid keeps on humpin' ter der front," answered Shorty, good-naturally.

The curtain fell that night on a well-pleased and satisfied audience. The New York Minstrels had made a hit, and were safe for a week of crowded houses.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Say, pard, wasn't that just a rattling old house for a first night? We must have everlastingly raked in the ducats," said Shanks, as they left the new theater, Nashville, at the close of the performance.

"Yer shoutin' solid sense, chummy. It did pan out like der big bonanza mine. I didn't stop ter count der stamps in der office, but jammed dem inter my pocket till I got back ter der hotel," replied Shorty.

"If dey're too hefty fer yer ter tote, dad, I'll get away wid a few of dem, jest ter help yer long," piped the kid, who was trying to light a cinnamon cigarette with a patent match.

"Dere ain't much doubt but yer'll get away wid more dan yer share of dem, Chips," laughed Shorty, patting him on the head.

"Yer don't give der shares out 'cording ter der size, d'yer?" asked Chips, wittily.

"I wish they did; then I'd come in for the lion's share," said Shanks.

"An' I'd hav' ter play der mouse, an' chuck on crumbs," chirped Chips.

"An' where'bouts does I com' in in dat combina-shun?" asked Shorty.

"Oh, yer can be der president of der savin's bank where we plant our sugar; den yer can bust up like der rest of dem does, skin out on yer ear wid der stamps, an' leave der crowd ter go kitin' an' howlin' up Salt River," said the kid, knowingly.

"Not for Joseph, if he knows it. Dat's a hypet-coon ol' job yer puttin' up for me, but I don't 'zactly care ter play checkers with my nose thro' an iron door jest yet," answered Shorty.

"Pshaw! Them fellows never get juggled. They just grease the law's fingers and slip through slick," observed Shanks. "Now, if it was some poor devil that—"

"Stop! Stand still, or we'll club you dead in your tracks!" yelled a voice, and four masked highwaymen, armed with murderous-looking bludgeons, sprang out from the shadow of an old building, and placed themselves in front of our little party.

"Guess yer fellers must be in der funeral bizness an' have graveyards of yer own," spoke up Shorty, who was the first to recover from the surprise.

"We don't want any of your chin; pass over your money!" commanded the biggest of the party, who appeared to be leader and spokesman.

"Oh, yer don't want any of my chin, I'm glad of dat, 'cause it mite spile my beauty 'f yer was ter steal my chin," coddled Shorty, who had now entirely recovered his self-possession, and was as cool as an iced cucumber.

"Hand over that swag you took in at your theater to-night, and be d—d quick about it, too. We didn't come here to joke," said the leader, hoarsely.

"Didn't come here ter joke; well, dat's funny 'nuff ter make a hoss laugh. Why, we thought yer were out on some masqueradin' tare."

"Hand over the money, or we'll brain you!"

"Hand ever nuthin'. Dis crowd ain't der kind dat hands over worth a cent. What yer want yer've got ter come an' take it out of our hides," answered Shorty, pluckily.

"Dat's der talk, dad; be game clean down ter yer bates. I'll stick ter yer like wax, an' never squeal if dey chaw me up inter mincemeat," chirped the kid.

"Slap that d—d brat's mouth, some of you!" yelled the leader of the highwaymen.

"I'll tend to his case and wring his devilish neck for him," answered a big, broad-shouldered ruffian, making a dash for the kid.

"Fust blood for our side!" shouted the kid, suddenly diving into an inside pocket, whipping out the little silver-mounted revolver his dad had bought for him in Frisco, and, leveling it at the approaching ruffian, fired, and the fellow staggered back, shot through the shoulder.

"I'm shot! I'm shot!" groaned the wounded robber, crawling off.

"Whoop! I set 'em up agin; dis beats der circus all holler!" exclaimed the kid, exultingly.

"Now's der time for us, pard!" shouted Shorty, taking advantage of the astonishment the shot from such an unexpected quarter had caused amongst the highwaymen, and ducking his head he leaped forward and butted the leader square in the bread-basket, knocking the wind clean out of him, and the next minute they were locked in each other's arms in a deadly struggle.

The other two ruffians rushed forward at Shanks, swinging their bludgeons, and in a moment more he would have been struck senseless to the pavement, when "bang" rang out the tiny pistol again, and one of them dropped his club with a howl of agony as the bullet shattered his wrist. Shanks jumped aside in time to escape the blow the other one aimed at him, and before the robber could recover himself, he closed with him, and threw him to the sidewalk.

"Hol' 'im still for jest half a second, dad, till I shoot a hole plumb through his gizzard!" shouted the kid, trotting over to where Shorty and the leader were still struggling for the mastery.

"Hold on! hold on! Don't fire, I'll give up!" exclaimed the robber, as he caught a glimpse of the kid, dancing around, revolver in hand.

"Drop 'im, dad, I've got him spotted," called out the youngster, a moment later.

"Mind yer eye, an' plug 'im if he budges, Chips," said Shorty, as he let go of him and stepped back.

"Don't you fret, ol' un, he's my huckleberry," answered the kid, aiming straight at the fellow's brawny chest.

"Say boy, just point that cursed thing some other way, it might go off," he said, when Shorty had run over to help Shanks secure his man.

"Nary point, for I'se feared yer'd go off 'stead of der pistol," answered the kid, firmly. "Guess yer must tink I'm fresh, an' dat yer can play me for a sucker."

The police arrived, as usual, after the trouble was all



"Dat's nuthin'," said the kid; "watch 'im kick a fly off yer ear," and the next moment the cop was flying in the air.

over. The prisoners were turned over to them, marched to the station-house and unmasked, when they proved to be some desperate characters who had long been the terror of the city, and for the arrest of whom a large reward had been offered.

The next morning the Nashville papers blazed forth with a double-headed description of the attempted robbery, the struggle, and the defeat and arrest of the highwaymen, complimenting our friends for their courage, praising the kid up to the skies, and thanking them for bringing such noted desperadoes within the clutches of the law.

Of course the newspaper account proved an immense advertisement for the minstrels, and that evening it seemed as if all Nashville had turned out to attend the performance, and the "New" Theater was packed like herrings in a box, half an hour after the doors were opened.

"I'm devilish glad you and the kid have got here, for I was more than half afraid that they'd pull the house down about our ears," said Dave Reed, meeting Shorty and the kid as they came in.

"What's der rumpus 'bout now?" asked Shorty.

"Well, they've been reading that highwaymen business up, and I think they're suffering from a severe attack of Shorty and Chips on the brain," replied Dave.

"Oh, 'f dat's all, dey'll get ober it soon, for I s'pose we'll hav' ter show up 'fore dey'll keep quiet," said Shorty, as he heard his name roared forth by a hundred voices.

"Yes, if you don't want to have us all buried under the ruins of the building."

"Come 'long, kid, den, an' let's get into our rigs," laughed Shorty, hurrying off to his dressing-room.

"Shorty!"

"Hey, you, der, fetch out de boy!"

"Shorty! Shorty!" yelled the crowd.

"Was dere anybody whisperin' my name out 'ere, 'cause Chips an' I's generally 'round when we're called, 'specially at meal time?" said Shorty, coming out leading the kid by the hand.

"Hip, hip, 'rah! and a tiger for der boys that can't be bluffed!" proposed a boy with a red shirt and a spatter of mud on his nose, and they were given with a vim that made the lights dance and the window panes rattle.

"Speech! speech!" rang out from all parts of the house, as Shorty and the kid were bowing their acknowledgments.

"Tell us how you got away with them buffers last night!" shouted a frant seat boy.

"Yes, and how little Shorty, the boss boy, plugged two of the robbers with his pistol!" shouted another.

"Ladies and fellers," said Shorty, stepping forward

to the footlights and looking around comically at the sea of faces before him. "I'se der smallest card in der pack, der littlest tater in der basket an' der lamest cripple in der horsepistol at makin' a speech dat ever was waltzed ter der front. I can't tell yer much of der 'tictars of de shindy las' nite, 'count of my 'tention bein' occupied mos' of der time in tryin' ter keep a big snoozer from chokin' me dat I hadn't time ter tak' many notes. It was a sorter lively ol' quadrille while it lasted, but dey hadn't der sand in der craws, an' squealed jes' as soon as we got der drop on ter 'em. I spect dey picked us up for a lot of flats; but 'f dey did, dat's where dey slipped up wid both feet. Der kid showed up game an' got in som' purty work wid his shootin'-iron; in fact, 'f it hadn't been for Chips, dey'd hav' made g-o-n-e goslings of us."

Shorty's speech was received with shouts of applause, and three rousing, roof-raising cheers were given for Shorty Junior, the boss boy, as they bowed themselves off the stage.

That night as Shorty was leaving the theater, he was surprised to find a body-guard of some twenty boys drawn up in line and waiting to see him in safety to the hotel.

"Hello, fellers! what's all dis sojerin' for? goin' ter hav' a moonlite parade?" asked Shorty, glancing admiringly along the line of young, active forms, bright eyes and laughing faces.

"We're the Shorty Guards, and we're going to see you safe home to the hotel. We mayn't be pretty to look at, but ther's one thing dead sure, dere won't be any of them tramps bouncing you while we're around," said a manly, well-built little fellow, stepping to the front.

"Tank yer, boys, tank yer; dis is a big compliment ter name der company after me, an' I'm more'n 'bliged. I used ter tink dat Shanks an' I were ol' and ugly nuff ter paddle our own canoes, but 'f yer tink not, we'll pull in our oars," replied Shorty, pleasantly.

"Attention, Guards! Fours right, march!" commanded the young captain, and the boys wheeled like veterans, and marching around, took up their places as an escort, and away they all started for the hotel, arriving at which, they gave three hearty cheers for Shorty, and left him.

"Well, what do you think of the Guards?" asked Shanks, as they were smoking a cigar before retiring.

"I tink der're 'bout as bright an' smart a lot of boys as you'll pick up anywheres. I'm goin' ter tak' der money dat der city pays for gobblin' dem robbers, an' buy dem just as snifty a rig-out of a uniform as yer want to look at," answered Shorty.

"A bully, good idea, pard!" exclaimed Shanks, enthusiastically.

Shorty was not one of the kind that let grass grow

under their feet; before noon the next day he had everything fixed.

The boys had been measured, and twenty gay uniforms of scarlet and gray, with gold braiding, were under way to be finished the next morning. Twenty light-breech-loading rifles with belts, boxes and the outfit complete, had been purchased and stored in a room which they proposed to use for an armory, and twenty boys known as the Shorty Guards were dancing and rushing around the city delirious with joy and excitement.

"I tink, dad, dat dey ort ter hav' som' kind of a flag ter fly," suggested Shorty Junior, who had taken as much interest, if not more than his paternal, in getting the boys fixed up.

"By Jingo, dat's so, Chip. Le's tak' anoder spin down town, an' get dem ter work on it ter once," replied his dad, and away the pair started again.

"I'm afraid, sir, we couldn't have it ready for you anyway by the time you mention. Why, we'd have to work all night," said the proprietor of the store, where they called.

"Den yer'll hav' ter work all night, or if yer don't somebody else will, for der flag's got ter be done, so jest put that in your pipe and smoke it. Yer can tell yer hands tho', dat if dey'll do der sittin' up. I'll do der puttin' up, let der racket cost what it will," answered Shorty, decisively.

"That's quite sufficient, my dear sir. I think now I can safely guarantee it ready at the hour you desire," said the store-keeper, obsequiously, and he kept his word.

Ten o'clock the next morning found the Shorty Guards all assembled at their armory and busier than bees, trying on their new uniforms, which had just been sent home, fitting on their belts, going through the "manual of arms" with their bright little rifles, and chattering, laughing and singing like forty thousand magpies.

"Now get yourselves into your own war harness, fellows, for the band'll be here to escort us down to the hotel at eleven sharp," said the little captain, flying around amongst his men, fixing a belt here, buckling a strap there, arranging this one's plume and showing the next one the proper slant for his rifle at a "right shoulder arms."

The parade was a decided success.

The appearance of the boys in their handsome and showy new uniforms, glistening rifles and neat equipments, led off as they were by the best band in the city, caused a big sensation amongst the citizens, who crowded the sidewalks along their line of march, and warmly applauded their excellent marching and soldierly appearance.

Reaching the Stacey House, from every window

which fluttered handkerchiefs and waved flags, the boy guards passed in review before Shorty, after which compliment their youthful commander drew them up in line facing the hotel, and Shorty Junior, advancing, presented the captain with a beautiful swan silk standard, upon which was embroidered in gold the words:

"SHORTY GUARDS."

Presented by

SHORTY JUNIOR."

"Capt'n an' fellers, when I hands ober dis flag ter yer keepin', I duz it feelin' dead sure dat I'se givin' it ter a lot of as squar' an' plucky a lot of boys as dis town can take up, if yer was ter hunt 'er ober wid a blue-tooth comb," said the kid, as he handed over the flag.

The young captain received it, and in a few well-chosen sentences thanked the little donor for his magnificent gift, and promised to treasure and defend it. The band struck up, the crowd cheered, the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and the guards, after presenting arms, wheeled to the left and marched back to their armory.

Full houses was no name for the jammed audiences that crowded the "New" Theater nightly during the rest of the New York Minstrels' engagement, and Shorty would have gladly remained over another week, had not all the arrangements been made and the troupe billed and advertised through the papers to appear that week in New Orleans; so there was nothing left for them but to pack up their traps, say good-bye, and skip off on their ears.

There was quite a turn out to see the troupe off. The Shorty Guards paraded with every member present, escorted our party to the depot, and started them off with three ringing cheers.

"Well, there's another crowd of tiptop fellers met and left," remarked Shanks, as the train whisked out of the depot.

"For dey were jolly good fellers,
Which nary body can deny,"

sang Shorty, as he fixed a bed for himself and the kid on two seats.

"Give that calf more rope," sang out one of the troupe.

"Wait till we get to New Orleans, and I'll buy you a Jewsharp," observed Shanks.

"Blaze 'way, fellers, der kid an' I's turned in for a snooze," answered Shorty, laughingly.

The run from Nashville to New Orleans was made without any incident worthy of chronicling. The country through which they passed was as brown, dusty and flat as a Long Island farmer, and the boys passed most of their time sleeping, and were only too glad when the conductor shouted New Orleans.

Stages were in waiting at the Levee to convey them to the St. Charles Hotel, where a splendid suite of apartments had been set aside for their accommodation.

"Say, dad, can I giv' Buster a spin 'round der town dis afternoon? I'd lik' ter see der place," asked the kid, as they were getting up from one of those splendid little lunches the St. Charles always sets out.

"I'm most afeard ter let yer go scootin' round on dat nag, but fyer sure yer can boss 'im, go 'head," answered Shorty, and the kid trotted off, kissing his hand to Shanks and sticking his fingers to his nose at some of the rest of the troupe.

Five minutes later he astonished the livery-stable proprietor by walking in and saying:

"Com', ol' curry combs, bounce a saddle on Buster an' snake 'im out of der stall till I yank 'im 'bout a little."

"Beeswax an' bulgines! you don't mean to say you're going to ride that whirlwind of a beast," said the man, staring at him open-mouthed.

"Dat's jest der size of it, boss; so trot 'im out. I guess he won't whirl me very bad," replied the kid.

"All right, youngster. There's an undertaker on the next block that keeps his hearse here; he'll be glad of the job. I'll run over and speak to him after you're gone, and as for me—why, you depend upon my sending the best carriages I've got to your funeral," remarked the man, as he put the tiny saddle and bridle on Buster, and led him forth.

"Don't yer buy any crape jest yet, ole hossfy, an' 'fi was yer I wouldn't speculate in any of dem black-bordered han'kerchiefs till yer get der latest returns," grinned Chips, as he settled himself in the saddle, patted Buster on his satin-coated neck and rode away.

After a pleasant canter around the city, and a look at the Custom House, Mint, Odd Fellows and Masonic Halls, and the different parks, with which the city is dotted, Shorty Junior turned his pony's head towards the stable, and was proceeding quietly through Lafayette Street, when a burly negro policeman hailed him with:

"Sa', boy, war d'ye get dat hoss from?"

"How much wud yer giv' ter find out?" inquired Chips, saucily.

"See yeah, chile, I don't want no imperdence gib ter me in my 'fishyul kerpacity," said the cop, swelling out his chest, and trying to look dignified.

"I guess yer 'fishyul kerpacity' is cleaning der guts out of fish down dere at Poydras Market," coddled the kid, as he let Buster walk slowly along under the shade trees.

"See yeah, boy, if I heah ye chuckin' any moah ob

dem defections or insinuations 'gainst my karracter, I'll 'rest ye, suah!" exclaimed the cop, angrily.

"Yer'll arrest yer grandmammy! What d'yer tak' me for, a sardine? Guess yer better tak' a spin 'long yer beat an' get some feller ter giv' dat woolly head of yer'n a shampoo wid a stable broom," said the kid.

"I warned ye onct, chile, not ter sass or fool wid me. It's my 'pinion dat ye stole dat hoss."

"It's my 'pinion yer a black idiot, an' ort ter be cut up for catfish bait," replied Shorty Junior, indignantly.

"Fore de Lord, I'se gwine ter 'rest ye foah dat!" shouted the now infuriated cop, making a rush for and grasping hold of the bridle, a familiarity that Buster resented by snatching away a mouthful of his coat-collar and flesh.

"Owl ow—ow—ouch—owdy—ow! d—n de hoss!" yelled the darkey cop, dancing around in the middle of the road.

"Dat's nuthin'," roared the kid; "jest yer watch 'im kick a fly off yer ear," and as he spoke he wheeled Buster around, touched him in the flanks with his heels, and the next moment the cop found himself turning somersaults in the road with a sensation of having been struck between the shoulders by a pile driver.

"Dere, I guess dat receipts der bill, an' yer won't be in such a hurry accusing der nex' feller of hoss stealin'," said the kid, galloping away like the wind, and leaving the cop sitting in the middle of the road, rubbing his head and trying to remember how it all came about.

New Orleans proved no exception to the other cities visited, for a full house welcomed the New York Minstrels, and the frequent and hearty bursts of applause gave evidence that the audience was well pleased with the performance. Shorty and the kid of course came in for the hit of the evening. The boys of the Crescent City had heard and read of their rackets till they were just wild to catch a glimpse of them, and their appearance was the signal for a mighty shout of welcome that made the old Academy of Music tremble. Taken altogether, their opening night was a decidedly flattering one in the extreme, considering that "stars" of the first magnitude were playing to empty seats at the other theaters.

"Wonderful house that, wasn't it?" said Shanks, meeting Shorty, as he passed to his dressing-room to change his rig.

"It's der boys as usual done der biz. I tell yer, pard, if yer only use der boys white, an' yer can get dem ter cotton ter yer wunst, yer all hunky-dory high-cockalorum, boss duck in der puddle," laughed Shorty, hurrying away to change.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR readers will remember that we left our fun-loving little friends, Shorty and Shorty Junior, in New Orleans, here they were playing to full houses, and having a hunky good time generally.

Stopping at the St. Charles Hotel at the same time was a pompous, portly, loud-voiced, big-headed agent for a patent clothes-pin company, who had rendered himself very obnoxious to the rest of the guests by "airs h' put on, and his habit of eternally intruding himself where he wasn't wanted, and intervi wing everybody on the merits of his "Patent self-acting, double ender clothes-pin."

"Now, 'on see, my undersized and unattractive-looking fellow," said Puffit, interrupting a conversation between Shorty and Shanks, "this patent, self-acting clothes-pin of ours has but to be seen to be appreciated. Once brought within the circle of your families it will prove a sweet boon. Let me now invite your earnest and strict attention to its merits."

Dat's all rite, pard, but we ain't on der clothes-pin lay just now, an' dis makes 'bout der forty 'leventh time yer've tackled me 'bout yer darned ol' ting," answered Shorty, and he was turning to continue his conversation with Shanks, when the latter drew up a chair, tapped him on the shoulder, and said:

"It is with gratification that I can look back and see with what giant strides our clothes-pin has leaped to the front. Why, my hearer, notwithstanding, that the fate of nations across the ocean are trembling in the balance, the demand for self-acting clothes-pins still increases."

"I wish yer'd balance off on yer ear," said Shorty.

"I will now prove to you by actual statistics, dat"—

"No, yer won't prove me nuthin'; go an' talk some oder feller ter death."

"Eminent statesmen and celebrated inventors have long been aware of this growing want of the people. This want has been clutched at by our company, and"—

"I'll clutch yer rite by der starboard ear, if yer don't skip off an' lemme 'lone," replied Shorty, getting angry.

Then Mr. Puffit sighed as if his liver was out of order, and hitching his chair over alongside of Shanks, laid his hand upon his head, and remarked impressively:

"All of these pins are made by our own firm; they are manufactured, I can assure you, out of the hardest wood, joined in the center by a regulating spring, and"—

"Would you have any objections to making a two-legged spring into some other part of the room and giving me a rest? Don't you remember you buzzed me two hours last night?" said Shanks.

"But, perchance, I omitted to mention"—
"You won't omit to mention that I spilled you all over the floor, will you?" demanded Shanks, so sternly that Puffit drew his chair back quickly, only to back it over to Shorty again and commence:

"Viewed in a speculative light, there can be no more profitable investment for the keen-eyed financier than our 'Patent self-acting, double-ended clothes-pin, money'."

"I'll double-end yer," shouted Shorty, jumping up and bestowing a couple of teeth-chattering kicks under agent's coat tails, amidst the laughter and applause of the lookers on.

"Hol' on, dad, an' yer'll see me put up a high ol' job on dat snoozer," grinned the kid.

"Bully boy wid a glass eye, but how 're yer goin' ter work it?" asked Shorty.

"Why der ol' cove he wants me ter get 'im an easy hoss ter ride out ter Carrollton on, an' I'm goin' ter lend 'im Buster," explained the boy.

"Oh, I tumble?" laughed his dad.

"Ha! ha! ha! good enough! When's the show coming off?" inquired Shanks.

"Der curtain 'll ring up just as soon's I can hustle myself 'roun' ter der stable an' get ol' Buster saddled up," answered the kid, darting away to the stable.

"I tink dat he'd better pin 'isself on wid a lot of dem patent self-cocking clothes-pins," chuckled Shorty.

"I think that there'll be a vacancy for an agent, if Buster gets a fair kick at him, and that there'll be some trouble in picking up all the pieces of this one," replied Shanks.

Ten minutes later the kid reined up Buster in front of the hotel steps, and the clothes-pin agent hastened over to meet him.

"What makes the animal look so skittish? I hope he's quiet dispositioned,—not but what I can ride anything ever foaled," he said, as Buster arched his neck and pawed the ground impatiently.

"Oh, dat's nothin', he knows he's goin' ter carry a big bug, an' it makes 'em sorter proud. Hop aboard," said Shorty Junior.

"That then accounts for his peculiar appearance," remarked Puffit, climbing into the saddle by the aid of the horse-block.

"Are yer all fixed now, alamaagoozalum?" asked the kid, who was patting the mustang's neck to keep him quiet.

"Y-e-s," replied Puffit, hesitatingly.

"Den away yer hops," shouted Shorty Junior, letting go of the bridle and slapping his pony on the flanks.

"Get up!" cried Mr. Puffit, and Buster did get up, but in such an entirely unexpected manner that the clothes-pin agent slipped down over his tail and landed in an astonished heap in the street, amidst shouts of laughter from the guests of the hotel, who had gathered on the steps to see the fun.

"W-h-a-t ma-made him do dat?" inquired Mr. Puffit, arising, straightening out his crushed ha' and glaring around at the grinning crowd.

"Yer reined 'im up teu tite," explained the kid, sticking his tongue in his cheek and winking.

Puffit allowed himself, after some persuasion, to be boosted into the saddle again by some of the grinning bystanders.

"Now den yer ol' sure," yelled the kid, and he told the truth, for Buster, suddenly humping his back, made a jump forward, braced his front feet rigidly, and shot the old clothes-pin agent head first into an empty ash-barrel, while his package of samples were scattered in every direction.

He was pulled out, pinned up, brushed off, a rip in his coat mended, the dents pressed out of his plug hat, and his bloody and skinned nose wiped dry and gummed all over with sticking plaster, but all the persuasion of the laughing crowd could not induce him to go in ten feet of Buster again.

"Well, I guess dat ends der circus," said Shorty, turning to go in when the kid who was holding Buster by the bridle, motioned him to remain.

"Ere, Sambo, d'yer know where Nixon's stable is?" he called out, to a fat, jolly-looking darkey that was passing on the other side of the street.

"Nixon's stable; yes, sah."

"Den jest ride dis hoss 'round dere an' giv' 'im ter der hostler, an' 'ere's a half dollar for yer trouble," said the kid, holding out the coin.

"Ye ain't jokin', boss, is ye; why, I'd ride de hoss half way 'roun' de world for a haf a dollar, suah," said the darkey, coming across the street, with a broad grin on his face.

"He's a little lazy, but yer can make 'im move, I guess," remarked Shorty Junior.

"Suah, I'll tickle 'im up, boss," replied the darkey, scrambling up into the saddle, and kicking the horse in the ribs with his bare heels.

He did not have to kick him often; before his heels could touch him the second time, Buster had started ahead with a bound, halted with a jerk, and bucked the darkey high in the air, moving out from under him at the same time, and allowing the unfortunate moke to come down on the hard stones with a chug that unjointed his spine, and loosened his scalp.

"What d'yer git off for?" demanded the kid, as the darkey scrambled to his feet, felt of his scalp, and looked around in a dazed and astonished manner.